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A LAYMAN'S MIND ON CREED AND CHURCH

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A LAYMAN'S MIND ON CREED AND CHURCH



A LAYMAN'S MIND

ON

CREED AND CHURCH

BY

JOHN STEWART TEMPLETON

CARPET MANUFACTURER

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1906

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EDITION PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE.

In four short letters written to the Editor of the *Glasgow Herald*, dated the 3rd, 6th, 10th, and 30th August, 1904, I urged that advantage should be taken of the disastrous decision of the House of Lords, then recently announced, to prepare a new short creed to supersede the Confession of Faith, and also to make some reform in the representation of the laity in the Church Courts. I have been asked to express these views in a more full and permanent form. To this request I have acceded the more readily that, in order to prove to myself that the task was not so difficult as might appear, I had actually begun to draft such a creed; and that, a few years previously, I had printed for private

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use a series of letters on kindred subjects addressed to an intimate friend, the father of three clergymen of the Church of England. This tentative creed, with some explanation of the theological views upon which it is founded, and these letters, I now venture to print for the use of relatives and friends.

Let me say that I have been influenced in coming to this decision by having received at that time, on the 11th August, the gift of a book entitled *Old Letters: a Layman's Thoughts on Current Religious Topics*, written by the late Mr. J. B. Mirrlees, of Redlands, Glasgow, with whom I had been acquainted. To my great surprise I found that, about forty years ago, he had given expression to many of my own thoughts. From these letters I purpose to quote largely, in the belief that such interest as may possibly attach to anything I may be able to say will be much enhanced by the coincidence of the opinions of two ordinary men of business. These opinions may neither be new nor original; but old truths sometimes secure attention by coming from a new and strange source. I even dare affirm that laymen may discuss the

deeper mysteries of existence with greater candour than clergymen who are more or less entangled by subscriptions, and who cannot easily escape the influence of early theological training.

My aim in writing is practical. I have also the hope that I may be able to help others who find the problems of life perplexing.

Let me now add in this public edition that Mr. Mirrlees was the founder of the eminent firm, Messrs. Mirrlees, Watson & Co., engineers, and makers of sugar machinery, Glasgow.

GLASGOW, *October*, 1906.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK	v
A TENTATIVE NEW CREED	3
FIRST ARTICLE: GOD THE CREATOR	11
FOURTH ARTICLE: THE HOLY SCRIPTURES	27
FIFTH AND SEVENTH ARTICLES: MAN'S FREEDOM OF WILL	61
SIXTH ARTICLE: FUTURE JUDGMENT	67
EIGHTH ARTICLE: THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST	71
NINTH ARTICLE: FAITH	101
TWELFTH ARTICLE: PRAYER AND MIRACLE	105
ELEVENTH AND THIRTEENTH ARTICLES: WHAT IS THE CHURCH?	114
FOURTEENTH ARTICLE: THE PRESBYTERIAN THEORY	133
LETTERS TO MR. SOUTHWELL: THE HIGH CHURCH THEORY	141
APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL STORY'S SPEECH ON THE CONFESSION OF FAITH	181
APPENDIX B: REPRINT OF THE CONFESSION AND DECLARATORY ACTS	187
APPENDIX C: EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE 39 ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND	228

DRAFT OF A TENTATIVE NEW CREED



DRAFT OF AN ATTEMPT TO FRAME A SIMPLE CREED, OR CONFESSION OF FAITH

1. We believe that God, whom we worship, is one Being, is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and omnipresent.

2. Creator of all things, He has endowed mankind with reason, conscience, affection, and freedom of will.

3. By the exercise of these faculties men are able to reach some knowledge of God through the study of His acts in creation and providence, and an honest and diligent search for Truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

4. The Holy Scriptures are writings selected by general consent from other literatures as being the history of God's dealings with the

chosen people of Israel, and as a collection of the inspired utterances of men of exalted piety and clear spiritual vision. The New Testament contains four biographies of Jesus Christ, and letters of His contemporary disciples. All these Scriptures, although written by fallible men, in language necessarily imperfect and liable to errors and unwarranted accretions in process of transmission and translation, are, together with the discoveries of God's laws in nature and the intuitions of enlightened conscience, the only authority we accept in matters of religious belief.

5. What we chiefly learn from Holy Scriptures is the character of God, and His purposes towards men of whose lives and destiny He is the Sovereign Disposer.

6. In these Scriptures it is declared that the spirit of man survives the dissolution of the body; that man is, as his conscience tells him, a sinner in the sight of God; that he is responsible for his actions; that he will be judged "according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad," and that his future state will be determined by that righteous judgment.

7. We learn also that God has declared His character to be best expressed by the word Love, that His true relation to the human race is that of a Heavenly Father, and that, in His extreme desire to save men from their sins without coercing their wills, the freedom of which makes men to be men, He has appealed, and continues to appeal, to their reason, conscience, and affection, by the fact of the life and death of Christ, and by the work of the Holy Spirit.

8. Jesus Christ, who declared Himself to be the Son of God, and to be pre-existent with God, whose character—singular, unique, perfect in balance—and whose claims—absolute in their voice of supremacy—are felt in their cumulative force to be superhuman, we apprehend to be no less than God come as man among men to be their Saviour. We believe that God being still in heaven while He was also on earth is therefore made known to us as a Father who sent His well-beloved Son to reconcile the world unto Himself, and that the death to which Christ, as Son, submitted, was the offer of Himself to bear the sins of men.

9. True or saving faith is that only which puts trust for acceptance with God upon the finished work of Christ, not upon anything we have done or can do, and which expresses love to Him by the keeping of His commandments.

10. We are further taught that the Holy Spirit, with whom the consciences of men of all races and in all ages have been more or less in contact, is also God in another aspect or phase, and that this Holy Spirit is ever ready to help men to come to repentance, to believe in Christ, to grow in holiness, and to perceive the essential truths contained in the Holy Scriptures.

11. Christ, during His life on earth, announced His purpose to found a kingdom of God. This kingdom has its domain in the hearts of men, and the members of it are all those who truly love and serve Him. For this kingdom, so far as it has visible forms called Churches (of which, however, the members may not all be members of the kingdom of God), He instituted the two rites or sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The one is figurative of initiation into the kingdom by

cleansing from sin, and valid only by the cleansing being real; the other is the expression of our faith by an act of loving remembrance of Christ's death and all its benefits. To attach a literal meaning to the language of its institution, which is metaphorical, as many of Christ's other words clearly were, is materialistic and superstitious.

12. Prayer, which is enjoined upon all men, is a true communion with God. We have the assurance that our requests, made in faith, will be granted so far as they are consistent with Divine wisdom and love.

13. Men, as they are associated in communities, no less than as single persons, are bound to serve and obey God. Hence comes the obligation to worship God in families and in convenient assemblies. Hence also the duty of the governments of nations to countenance and protect all Christian Churches, so far as that can be done with due regard to justice.

14. We believe that the government of Christian Churches is very much a matter of accommodation to time, place, and circumstances. That of the Presbyterian Church is

founded on the precedents of the Apostolic age. The only rulers then appointed were of two kinds—the Elder (Presbyter) alternatively called Overseer (Bishop) and the Deacon. These officers were selected by the whole body of disciples, on account of superior character and of fitness to preside and to teach, but never to perform any sacerdotal function.

NOTES OF SOME THEOLOGICAL VIEWS UPON WHICH THE CREED IS FOUNDED

FIRST PROPOSITION OR ARTICLE

In the first article of the suggested Creed which attempts to name the exclusive attributes of God, it is not said that He is omnipotent. The omission is deliberate and due to the consideration that the term, without qualification, has led to judgments of the Divine actions which are erroneous and harmful. The Scriptures indeed say that "with God all things are possible," but they also say that "it is impossible that God should lie." His power, therefore, is limited by His qualities. The author of "Old Letters" states his belief in the fact in these words, "The freedom of God's will is absolute, and yet we may say with reverence that He is under the necessity of being true to His own character, and were He to do anything unrighteous, unloving,

ungracious, He would cease to be God." But again, His power is limited by His own laws and the facts of all existence. He cannot make two and three to be six, nor the three interior angles of a triangle to be other than, together, equal to two right angles. Applying this thought to the physical world which He has fitted for human habitation, the adjustments of this globe we call the earth to the sun round which it moves, are amazing in their subserviency to the intended purpose. But the very fixing of the axis and of the revolutions which give us the pleasant alternations of the seasons and of day and night makes it necessary that the poles be ribbed in ice and the tropics fierce with heat. But cold and heat are material evils inevitable in the adjustment, and we can conceive of no other by which they could be avoided. So of the still more wonderful creation of the moral and spiritual nature of man. If he be given freedom of will, there must, at some point, be wrongness of choice, the consequent evil of which God Himself cannot avert. The proposition I wish to reach is that God is not omnipotent in the sense in which the word

is often loosely used, and that He has done, and is doing now, only the best possible. Let me pursue a little more closely this line of thought which, to my mind, leads better than any other towards the solution of the mystery of the permission of pain and sin.

At the outset let us never forget how finite is the human mind. The conception of a Being, or of matter, or of force, which is not the consequence or result of any antecedent cause, is beyond its grasp. We may use words, but the fact itself is unthinkable. So of space which is boundless, and of time which has neither beginning nor end. In attempting to reach to such verities, we feel driven back and crushed in the impotence of our imagination. They surround us like impassable walls against which we beat in vain. And even such knowledge of the universe as we have slowly and painfully acquired is awful and overwhelming. The ascertained distance of the sun from the earth is a strain upon thought, yet, by approximate computation, the position of one sun among other suns is likened to that of a solitary ship on the ocean, midway between Europe and America; and astronomers now tell us

that they can prove the existence of forty to fifty millions of such suns. If we descend from vastness to minuteness, we find no bottom to our plummet. What must be the muscles and nerves which govern the motions of some scarcely visible insect? If we examine the strata of the earth we find indications that many of the lower of them at one time formed the upper; and, by data within our observation, we can faintly conceive the process of submergence, and its duration in periods of time, which are immense in their remoteness.

Here let us pause. There are men who say that this universe has no Author. It is difficult to believe that they are sincere, for I hold that the knowledge that there is a "Divinity who doth shape our ends" is innate. The tissues of our flesh are so soft, interacting, delicate, and complex that the displacement of a fibre may end in paralysis or insanity; the atmosphere of our globe is composed of gases, any change in whose combination would cause death to every living creature; the planets are so poised in space that any alteration from their orbits would issue in some wide cataclysm. Is it for a moment conceivable that

existence thus dependent on conditions so minutely balanced and co-related could possibly be the result of any self-generating, self-regulating properties? The philosophy of evolution is credible and acceptable so far as it means the discovery of the slow processes of creation. So far as it implies or suggests that these processes are fortuitous and undirected it is only the travesty of truth. Who that has seen Stonehenge near Salisbury or Callernish in the far Hebrides can doubt that the circled stones were placed on their sites by the hands of men; and who that has pondered over the flight of birds can doubt that the apparatus of flight is the work of some intelligence immeasurably greater than man's? Against inferences so obvious, spontaneous, and inevitable I can think of no argument which can be urged but this: A disputant may say, "Even if I admit that the evidence of design and of unity of purpose discernible throughout the universe implies the existence of a Designer or Creator, we have still to account for the existence of this Creator, and if you are able to conceive the existence of a Creator who is Himself uncreated, is it not as reasonable that

I should be able to conceive of a universe which has not had a Creator? Are we not both equally agnostic? Neither of us really knows." My answer to any such contention would be twofold. In the first place, reason itself tells us that the human intellect is limited in its reach; if it can take one step securely why should that step be distrusted because it is powerless to take the next step? In the second place, it may be more effectively said that the intellect is not the only faculty by which we apprehend truth. We have also conscience or intuition, affection, and will. Of course such powers of perception are greater in some minds than in others, and greater or less by the use or abuse of them. Moreover, it is a matter of common experience that the will can and often does dominate reason, conscience, and affection, and that in this way some men can hush the voices within them. I am inclined to believe that we are standing on surer ground when we rest the proof of the existence of a personal God on the fact of the conscience of men, which may be said to be universal, rather than on His existence as the necessary Cause of these stupendous effects we call Nature.

Jesus Christ, the wisest man who ever lived, implied all this when He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

I assume then that behind and above matter there is mind—a Director, Designer, Sustainer. The question for me is not, Is there a God, but, What is God? In attempting this search we are driven to apply the analogies of our own little lives to the immeasurable Divine life. Thinking then as a man, and using, as we must, the language of men, I have found it helpful to regard God as the Great Artificer. I can, in a dim way, see the construction in successive stages of the inorganic earth, air, and water. When these are complete there comes the introduction of vegetable life; and what life is, even in its lowest forms, has eluded our closest search. Thereafter follows the animal from its primal cells up through the steps of the vital and the sentient, to the highly articulated fish and bird and beast. Beyond all this to evolve the self-conscious being we call man, who can think, who can discern the good from the evil, who can love or hate, who can freely decide between competing attractions, is truly a consummation of creative ingenuity. We have

not only the presumption, but the evidence, that it has been a long laborious process. It has not been the instantaneous result of a sort of magical fiat of Divine will, but of a slowly advancing purpose. I can see how the product and maintenance of what we call moral qualities in the lower animals—I mean foresight, courage, watchfulness, and the like—must be a supreme enterprise of fitness of means to the end. The means actually taken—the making of the life of one animal to depend upon the death of other animals—are doubtless perplexing to many minds. Nature has been spoken of as "red in tooth and claw with ravin," and as "a reign of terror, hunger, sickness, with oozing blood and quivering limbs." All this is the language of exaggeration. For there is reason to believe that at the moment an animal is attacked its nervous system is paralyzed. Of this we have the well-known case of the sensations of David Livingstone when he was seized and carried off by a lion, and it will be remembered that the examination of the consequent injuries of the bones of his arm and shoulder was a means of identifying his body before burial in West-

minster Abbey. A little consideration will show that in the animals which prey, and in those whose safety depends upon watchful care, speed and other resources of protection, evasion, and escape, the mental and physical activities are kept in constant exercise. Nothing but such stimulus would save both the one and the other from degeneracy and extinction. These inevitable consequences make intelligible to me the whole scheme of animated nature, and lead to the conclusion that it is the best possible;—that even God cannot make it better than it is. There are doubtless particular instances of apparently useless cruelty in the instincts of some of the lower animals. But I believe that they are all accountable on the principle of securing the maximum of well-being by the infliction of a relatively small amount of pain. The habit of the cuckoo, for example, has long seemed to me a biological riddle, irreconcilable with any idea of beneficent purpose; but I think that I have now found a solution in the conjecture that the loud, strident, pervading note with which it is furnished is necessary to alarm and so check the impatience of all other birds to quit

their nests before the incubation of their eggs is complete.

And, if a momentary digression be allowed, let me say that these severities in Nature suggest the question how far have our methods of philanthropy not had the effect of fostering the very evils they attempt to remove —idleness, improvidence, and pauperism?

In man a higher platform of life is reached, but only reached, held, and advanced by hardships and sufferings in many ways analogous to those borne by the lower animals. The world is full of contrivances to enforce effort. The earth produces food, but only in sufficient quantity and variety by the expenditure of labour and skill. Population increases and presses upon the means of subsistence. Man must struggle to live. He must subdue and convert to his own use the forces of nature—the strength of the wind, the rush of the river—and that at the cost of occasional disaster. Thus, much that appears evil is not evil. Pain is often the warning signal of danger, and often the stern monitor and ally of conscience. Death, which to most minds is the climax of all calamities, is really a boon

to general humanity, for without it the world could not hold its inhabitants, and the continuance of the lives of powerful individual men would arrest the progress of the race. Death, therefore, hunger, cold, privations, wounds, are only necessary accessories to the great general good. Again, we must say that the plan by which that is achieved is the best possible, and that any other we can imagine would be a failure.

I have spoken of the creation of man as the consummation of the work of the Divine Artificer—

"What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

And yet this same Hamlet who utters these words, in the very next scene of the play, avows—

"I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious . . . what should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth?"

Of this creature man, so great in his capacities, so weak in his performances, I hold the highest prerogative to be his endowment of free will; and, speaking as a man, I hold also that God has restrained Himself from interference, and guarded its free play with special care. For why otherwise has man been left to work out his own salvation, in the lower sense of that word? He has torn from nature each of its secrets. Along every line of material progress how slow has been his advance. Along those also of intellectual progress—the formulation of law, the right methods of government, the scientific treatment of disease, the conception of personal liberty, and of toleration of opinion—he has gone blundering on for centuries. Why, it might be asked, did not God long ago inform man of the uses of anæsthetics, steam, or electricity? The reason must be that God has not done, and will not do, for man that which he can do for himself. He has given honour to man in allowing him to discover and invent, and by effort and experience to attain to right principles of conduct. In all these ways man's freedom has been respected and conserved. But this freedom of will, if it be real, involves

the contingencies of error, mistake, and sin. "It is impossible but that offences will come." So then between man free and capable of sinning, and man without freedom, and therefore not true man, there can be no alternative, not even for God. This boldness of speech may appear irreverence. It is not so, but zeal to vindicate Him from the misconceptions which arise from the careless use of the word omnipotence. The unspoken thought in many minds is often, Why does God, being Almighty, permit evil? Crimes, cruelties, atrocities, seem to pass unnoticed. The skies above are as brass looking down with stony eyes. Many a soul has cried in anguish—

> "Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
> That sees into the bottom of my grief?
> Alack, alack that Heaven should practise stratagems
> Upon so soft a subject as myself."

We lose a friend, a husband, a son, whose life seems to us indispensable. Why, oh why, has he been taken and we left? How mysterious, we exclaim. But is it really mysterious? If the death has been the result of disregard of ordinary precautions, can we expect that God will interpose by the suspension of His own

laws? The very fact that He did not interpose is proof that He could not. Even in such an individual instance, we can still say that "God is not willing that any should perish." How could we love God if we thought Him to be a Being who allowed any evil to occur which could have been prevented, or whom we thought indifferent to our fate and unmoved by our troubles? Many years ago, in discussing this subject with a friend who avowed himself to be agnostic, I said, on the impulse of the moment, pain and suffering are certainly indisputable facts, but, on my assumption of the truth of revelation, God Himself came in the person of Jesus Christ into the world and bore a share of that pain and suffering. So it is that the death on the cross has touched the hearts of men in all ages, and still calms their doubts.

My views of natural theology—of God as the Divine Artificer—would be incomplete and disproportionate if we did not give full consideration to what His labour has been—if, when regarded as "a best possible," we were forgetful of what that labour—that "best possible"—actually is.

GOD, THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD

This world of ours is a most marvellous concurrence of adaptations in order to become the home of man. In all of them we find evidence of benevolent intention. Provision is made not only for the necessaries of existence, but for its enjoyment. Our being endowed with the faculty of delight in music cannot be explained on any other ground than as a gift contributing to pleasure. Flowers and fruits are especially gratuitous, even although they are known to serve other ends than the gratifications of our sense of colour, form, and perfume. The beauty of scenery, of mountain, valley, and stream, overarched with the canopy of sky and changing cloud, its "majestical roof fretted with golden fire," can be no result of mere fortuity. Our family and social instincts are a blessing to us. All life is full of the deepest interest, with its domestic dramas of love and marriage, of births and deaths, or its larger spectacles of political events. And how much does "this goodly frame the earth" contain of things that minister to our wants. Not only have there been provided during countless ages the stores of iron, coal, and the like, but the gold and silver, the marbles and

gems, of which the purpose is embellishment rather than utility. The woods of the forest, many of the properties of matter, the qualities and powers of the domestic animals, are evidently all instances of Divine benevolence. And all these efforts of ingenuity are so planned as to be subservient to moral discipline. The world is a school of virtue. To that end there are liabilities to abuse of the appetites whose proper end is good. The desire for food, necessary for the life of the individual; the desire for procreation necessary for the continuance of the race; controlled are a source of pleasure; uncontrolled a fountain of miseries. Yet we often magnify and nurse the ills which are chiefly of our own making until we make ourselves believe that this world is a place of woe, "a vale of tears," and we the inmates of bodies we call vile. What is worse, we take merit for these depreciations, as if that would be a recommendation to the Divine Author of them all. How much more noble, how much more masculine, is the spirit of the Psalmist when he exclaims, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, for His wonderful works to the children of men."

FOURTH ARTICLE

THE authority of the Holy Scriptures in matters of religious belief is the subject of the Fourth Article of the suggested creed.

To all men who are observant of the drift of opinion during the last half century it must be evident that we are passing through a revolution of thought as great as that of the 16th century. The Reformation was a revolt against the authority of the Church. To-day, men are challenging the authority of the Bible.

The Church of Rome claims to be the one only true infallible Church by whose sanction the Scriptures, and in particular that translation of them called the Vulgate, are certified to be the authentic inerrant words of God. The Reformed Churches protested against and repelled the

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assumption of the infallibility of any Church—that of Rome or any other—but asserted in their Confessions of Faith that the Scriptures were infallible, going so far as to say in our Scottish Presbyterian document that "it pleased the Lord to reveal Himself," etc., "and afterwards to commit the same wholly unto writing"—and they adduced "the entire perfection thereof" as an argument giving evidence that it is "the word of God by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages"—adding further that "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and Divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."

We can easily see how naturally the Reformers, in rejecting the authority of an infallible Church, sought to substitute the authority of an infallible Book. But if our attitude of mind be the noble one of reaching truth at all hazards, and at any expense of sentiment, it is as competent for us to-day to dispute the Dogma of an infallible Book as it was for Luther and his colleagues to dispute that of the infallibility of a Church. I propose

then to examine both these claims, and to carry the enquiry further into the consideration of such questions as how far and in what sense does the Bible contain a Divine revelation, by what means are we able to form a judgment of that revelation, and how far in such an attempt do we receive the help of Divine illumination.

It is, unhappily, the case that the claims of the Church of Rome, which have captivated the imagination of many intelligent men in our own day, still need refutation. I understand these claims to be that this is the one church which alone is in possession of the promised guiding Spirit of God, and has been commissioned to be the interpreter not only of the Scriptures but also of an unwritten word of God or tradition, which is gravely argued to be equally authoritative with the written word of God. These claims are founded on the testimony of Scripture itself, on the historical continuity of the Church, on its Divine character of holiness, and on its unity in all ages and in all places. There seems to me no difficulty in shattering these proud assumptions. I deny that any corporate

association of Christians has the right to call itself *the* Church of God. Any promise of the gift of the Spirit of God, of which I have knowledge, was given to all true believers in Christ, not to any particular association of them. The argument from historical continuity is soon disposed of. What is essential to such an assumption is the continuity of the Divine life of Christianity, not the continuity of any one channel in which that life flows. That life may have many channels, and may even leave its original channel, just as the River Nile disperses below Cairo before reaching the sea. The Holy Roman Empire, which "from the days of Constantine till far down into the middle ages, was, conjointly with the Papacy, the recognised centre and head of Christendom," has passed away so lately as August, 1806, on the abdication of the Emperor Francis the Second. Its extinction has not affected the secular ideas upon which it was founded, and similarly the extinction of the Holy Roman Church, which may be nearer than many people think, would not affect the Christianity upon which it arose. The question then resolves itself into this,

how far is the religion of the Church of Rome the religion of Jesus Christ, and is that religion equally, or more discernible, in other Churches? As to who are His true followers, Christ Himself has given the criterion when He bids us beware of false prophets. If then we must know and judge by fruits, can the Church of Rome bear that scrutiny, and has it marks which make undoubted its right to assert any monopoly of spiritual insight? Let us thank God that multitudes of men in that Church are now, and have been in all past times, true members of the Kingdom of God;—men and women of pure and noble lives; saints indeed and imitators of Christ. That, however, has been due to their Christianity, not to their special Catholicism. But when we come to judge the Church of Rome in its official or corporate condition, we must impeach its character and pronounce its unfitness to be the exclusive channel of truth. Its clergy have usurped the place of the laity. They have proved themselves conspirators against liberty. They have sought to crush science from the days of Galileo to those of Dr. St. George Mivart and the Abbé

Loisy. The history of this Church is written in the bloodshed of the Albigenses, in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in the murders and tortures of the Inquisition. At many periods the dissolute lives of its priesthood have been subjects for satire and denunciation. Popes have sold benefices, and have even connived at robbery and fraud. The Keys of Heaven and Hell, falsely alleged to be given to them as the successors of St. Peter, have been dangled before the eyes of men to frighten them into submission. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "the one mediator between God and man," has virtually been displaced by a crowd of saints whose ability to hear any prayers is more than doubtful. Mary, the parent of His humanity, has been exalted to share attributes which are Divine. She is "the mother of God," herself "immaculately conceived," "the Queen of Heaven." The clergy still encourage devotion to her images, dirty but holy, as I have painfully seen at Lyons, or clean in white and blue as are sold in thousands at Lourdes. It is difficult to speak calmly of the consecration and adoration of bread, of the doctrine of indulgences, and

of masses for the dead, and for the living too, as we learn from the amusing squabbles of Cardinals Newman and Manning. Nor is it easy to repress contempt for the relics exhibited for the veneration of the credulous, or indignation that pictures should be permitted such as that I have seen in the Vatican itself, in which God the Father is represented as an old man. In one word, as has been said with particular reference to the Roman Catholic Church, "No hierarchy has been so proud as the Christian, no superstition more abject, no zeal more ruthless, no casuistry more depraved. It is the most amazing, the most afflicting paradox in history."

It is grievous to say all this, and yet it is necessary, in order to justify my contention that relatively to the Christianity of the New Testament, the Church of Rome is really schismatic and has forfeited all right to be our guide in spiritual matters. Still, I wish to be just. The individual Christian is usually better than his creed. I write these lines at Nuremberg, where are found in such remarkable profusion, as also in the National Museum at Munich, the memorials of mediæval religion in

the sculptured representations of the Bible stories. Let us not forget that in these days there were no printed books, and the manuscripts few and generally inaccessible. The life-size wood carvings of the tragedy on Golgotha, of the infant Christ on his mother's lap, of the dead body of our Saviour in the arms of the three Maries, were doubtless texts from which would be preached from devout lips sermons which touched many a conscience and heart. On the roof of one chapel there are depicted the stories of the Old Testament from Adam to Daniel. They are grotesque and dead to us, but each of the paintings could have been made instinct with lessons of faith and love. Doubtless, too, the Church, armed with powers often rightfully used although as often abused, stopped many deeds of violence in a lawless and turbulent age. We may well also believe that there were many noble-minded monks and nuns who, by the true surrender of their lives to the will of God, proved to the world that Christianity was real. If, with a monopoly of such learning as existed, and wielding a power generally acknowledged, the clergy became proud and dominant, we must

remember that their temptations were great, and allow that, in certain states of society, their despotism was beneficial. I can see also that, with the best intentions, they would be tempted in the early centuries of the Church to conciliate the pagan peoples among whom they dwelt by assimilating Christian ceremonial to the prevailing ritual of Greco-Roman worship, and that, in this way, the simple presbyter or elder became the robed priest of an eucharistic sacrifice. I am also willing to suppose that, with similar good intentions, penance and auricular confession grew into sacraments in the belief that authoritative absolution was expedient in order to appease consciences craving for some tangible sign and assurance of pardon.

But even if these accommodations be regarded as necessary stages in a process of the evolution of religion, the conditions which made them excusable no longer exist. By the men of primitive Christianity the universe could only be imagined as a magnified Roman Empire, a territory bounded by level seas, and lighted and warmed by celestial lamps. Language such as God sitting on a Heavenly throne, and Christ

ascended to His right hand would therefore be literal to them, while it is only metaphorical to us. Surely in these eighteen centuries we have travelled far from these points of outlook. Such knowledge as we have gained has been made universal by the invention of printing. Philosophic thought has been widened and become more exact. Mankind is no longer in leading strings. It has got beyond the stage of object lessons. The laity are more and more asking for the credentials of authority, and questioning the reasons for their large exclusion from the councils of the Church.

If, then, in the exercise of the freedom won for us, in which we are exhorted to stand fast, we dismiss the claim of the Church of Rome, are we bound to admit that of the Protestant Churches, when they assert the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and their absolute reliability in all matters of religious belief? The motives of the Reformers in substituting an infallible Book for an infallible Church were obvious. The Bible became the sole authority for the doctrines they held. It was the more necessary, therefore, that it be

regarded as infallible. There is something captivating to the intellect in the possession of such a major premiss as that the Bible is God's inerrant word;—the only perfect and complete revelation of Himself. Every separate statement, or even every word, becomes the minor premiss from which there can be no appeal. But this major premiss to which the Churches have so tenaciously clung is now said to be no longer valid. Let us examine it for ourselves.

In the first place, can more be said of the Bible, regarded as a selection, compilation, or canon, than that it is the result of the general and gradual consent of religious men in many ages? The Scriptures themselves nowhere assert that they, and they alone, are wholly Divine. They even declare that God has not left Himself without a witness in any nation. Some of the prophets of the Old Testament do claim a divine origin for their own writings, but it is still competent for us to ask them for their credentials;—to ask them how they know that the words of which they are the authors were not their own words but God's. Apparently we

reach some sure and tangible testimony to the Divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures if we admit Christ to be Divine and His verdict therefore authoritative. But even here there is uncertainty. He has made no explicit statement on the subject, and the question still remains, Do His references to them amount to deliberate sanction of the Jewish belief that the Old Testament writings are throughout Divine? Mr. Mirrlees says, "I cannot see that this argument is admissible unless we are prepared to dogmatise regarding the precise extent to which Christ's Godhead was veiled by His assumption of our nature as indicated by the expressions 'increased in wisdom,' 'in all things like His brethren,' and so on. Without dogmatising, it may be said that in all matters of moral right or wrong, holiness, justice, and love, He was infallibly true to His Father's nature; but that in details of ancient history and other matters merely human, He derived His information from the same sources which were open to His brethren, and that to correct the misconceptions of past ages in matters

of history and science was not the work the Father had given Him to do." Christ's use of the Book of Isaiah and of the Psalms, and the appropriation of them to Himself, certainly stamps those parts of the Old Testament as inspired prophecy. Still, His sanction of the 110th Psalm does not necessarily imply His approval of the 109th and 137th, nor necessarily settle the question of their authorship. He refers to Moses, but only to traverse the laws of Moses. His allusion to the prophet Jonah presents a difficulty. It is, to my mind, probably explicable in this way:—The book had been written as a parable or story intended to raise the thoughts of the Jews to a larger conception of the Divine benignity towards other nations than their own. No one might be more astonished than its author to learn that his narrative should be read as literal fact. Christ's reference to the imprisonment of Jonah in the whale's belly may be no more than might be a reference of our own to the imprisonment of Christian and Hopeful in the Castle of Giant Despair. Whatever importance we attach to Christ's use of the

Old Testament as establishing its canonicity, it is beyond doubt that we have no external authority to assure us that the New Testament Scriptures, each and all of them, are the inspired word of God. In fact, the right of several of them (as the Epistle of St. James, the 2nd of St. Peter, the Hebrews, and the Revelation of St. John) to a place in the New Testament canon has been disputed.

Accepting the Bible as it has come to us as a generally recognised collection of sacred writings, we have still to satisfy ourselves that the large affirmation of the Westminster Confession of Faith of "their entire perfection," "their infallible truth," and "Divine authority" is sustained. As to this I have never been able to understand how the doctrine of plenary inspiration, or verbal exactness, could be held. Let us take for example the two cases of the superscription on the cross and of the Lord's prayer, where accuracy might be held to be imperative. The former is given differently by all the four biographers. Three of them must be wrong, and all four of them may. So also in the latter case. In one of the Gospels what is asked to be forgiven is debts, in another sins,

in another trespasses. But not only so, in one the prayer ends with the petition, "And bring us not into temptation," and in another, the doxology follows which now is generally admitted to be the addition of some later transcriber of the original manuscript. It needs no "higher criticism" to make the discovery of the contradictions to be found in the Scriptures. They are plain to any intelligent reader. Take one instance only from the Old Testament, to which I have never seen any reference made. In the 20th chapter of Exodus, the 4th Commandment ends with the words, "For in six days, etc.," but in the 5th chapter of Deuteronomy these words are not appended, and, at the end of the enumeration of all the Commandments, it is said, "These words the Lord spake," etc., "and He added no more." When you come to the New Testament, at the very outset you run shock up against the perplexities of the two genealogies. And it is not only that they differ, but that they apply to Joseph, who was the reputed, but not the actual, father of Jesus. Even here, there is the further difficulty that the Apostle John, in the 4th Gospel, speaks of Jesus as the Son

of Joseph. Of direct contradictions I may give the instances of the two accounts of the death of Judas Iscariot as written by St. Matthew and by St. Luke, and again, the details of what was seen and heard by the companions of St. Paul when Christ appeared to him on his way to Damascus, of which there are three accounts in the Acts of the Apostles. In the vital matter of the resurrection, the discrepancies, or, to say the least, the carelessness of the narratives are conspicuous. St. Matthew says that the early visitors to the tomb were "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary." St. Mark says, "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome." St. Luke says, "Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James." And St. John mentions Mary Magdalene only. Further, there is the difficulty as to Christ's instructions before His death to His disciples to meet Him in Galilee when the actual place of meeting was immediately close to Jerusalem. Returning to the Old Testament, I feel compelled to say that it contains much from which intelligent assent must be withheld. The early chapters of Genesis are evidently legendary. The account, for example, of the

building of the Tower of Babel is no more than an early attempt to explain the diversities of language, the cause of which was puzzling to the primitive mind. The story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is not historical, and probably was never intended by its author to be historical, but only a myth embodying a spiritual fact. By the knowledge of God I acquire from science, which in its own proper sphere is equally authoritative with the Bible, I can now believe that the birth of man must be relegated to remote ages, and that the movement of the race has been ascent, not descent. I feel equally free by instinctive conscience to pronounce much of Jewish history to be illustrations of revenge and unjustifiable cruelty which are in no way examples for us. I can unhesitatingly condemn as indecent some of the recorded tales, such as that of Lot and his two daughters, and I feel at liberty to doubt whether some of the Old Testament books, such as the Song of Solomon, should ever have had a place in the Canon. In the New Testament there are many obscurities in the quotations from the Old. Indeed, there appears to be no prediction agreeing with the statement "that it might be

fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets that He (Christ) should be called a Nazarene." There are even suspicions that some alleged events are adjusted to supposed predictions. Certain of the incidents of Christ's birth, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, have all the look of pious legends. The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament now extant date from about the middle of the 4th century, and the loss of the still earlier copies suggests the possibilities of unwarranted additions to the original text. We now know beyond dispute that the verses in 1st John, 5, 6, and 7, "there are three which bear record in heaven," etc., are an interpolation and therefore spurious, and there is considerable evidence for the supposition that the words in St. Matthew's Gospel, 28th and 19th, "Baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," were originally "Baptising them in My name," and yet these two passages are held to be the specific statements in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, and so appear in the Shorter Catechism "with proofs" as taught in our Scottish Board Schools. Is this right? And let me add parenthetically, is it right that we

go on teaching our children that God acts "out of His mere good pleasure," "for His own glory," and that He elects "some to everlasting life"? Is that a wise or even a true representation of our heavenly Father to young impressible minds?

If then we are driven to the conclusion that the Scriptures are in many ways inaccurate, and therefore not in any strict sense infallible, what is left to us? We gain the healthful freedom and satisfaction of discovering for ourselves, unfettered by the chains of external authority, the truth which the Scriptures themselves do contain: "The letter of them killeth, the spirit of them makes alive." It prevents the building of doctrines upon single isolated words or phrases which they were never intended to bear. We are saved from the habits of equivocation and casuistry which are fostered by attempts to explain away, minimise, or deny manifest errors. We avoid the strategic mistake of defending outworks which are indefensible. We relieve the minds of simple earnest people from the distress of feeling the incompatibility of much in Scripture with what they have been taught of its inerrancy, and

from fears suggested by verses, such as the 16th of the last chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, which do not occur in the oldest Greek manuscripts.

If then we are free to judge the Scriptures themselves, the question becomes urgent, By what mental faculties are we able to discriminate between what is essential and authoritative and what is accidental and unimportant? These can be no other than the conscience and the reason of every man. The existence of the one faculty is as certain as that of the other. Conscience, whose domain is the moral and ethical, not only includes but transcends reason, just as our perception of musical sounds is something more than hearing, and our perception of harmony of colour is something more than sight. Without its assent, dogmas, which are only intellectual propositions, cannot become truth. Conscience makes that to be conviction which reason accredits as knowledge. It pronounces languid and easy acceptance of statements, however much their authority be vouched, to be credulity rather than faith. Conscience or spiritual intuition is therefore the essential organ for the discovery of truths

which are Divine. This is what is said of it in the volume of *Old Letters*: "Intuition, not argument, is the ultimate court of appeal which judges of statements claiming to be representations of spiritual truth." . . . "I can understand how Mr. M—— will lose his loving Christianity if he thinks that the gospel of salvation is to be apprehended through the cultivation of the reasoning powers. Christianity and logic are as far apart as poetry and arithmetic. You cannot prove the heart-searching truths of the poet by arithmetic, although indeed the true poet never makes a statement that can be disproved by arithmetical rules. . . . What you call intuition is sometimes called inspiration, conscience, the verifying faculty; by Mr. M—— it is called 'healthy instinct'; by St. Paul it is called 'revelation.' The grand idea to be kept in view is that a man's real belief can be founded on nothing else than the power of discerning truth which God has implanted in his being—in other words, that faith is the gift of God. . . . Our acknowledgment of spiritual truth, as of all other truth, must result not from an intellectual recognition of the source of its authority, but

from the Divine power which it has in producing conviction. . . . If the Scriptures fail to convince our reason of the rightness of any particular doctrine, they cannot be said in such a case to exercise any real authority. We may, indeed, assent to the doctrine because of the general credibility of Scripture, but we cannot be said to believe it in any proper sense of the term. We shall never, I think, arrive at a right understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ till our faith is purged from every element of human authority; so that it shall rest in no respect on the wisdom of men, but wholly on the power of God. . . . I think that we should deal with Scripture, not as an infallible declaration, but rather as the testimony of a credible witness, like John the Baptist, of whom it was said 'he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.' . . . I cannot agree with you in saying that the Bible is *the only* guide to God. I should rather say that God's own Spirit is the only sure guide. Without God's Spirit the Bible is no real guide at all; and if God's Spirit is the true guide, we must not limit the means He may choose to bring man

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to Himself. . . . Bear in mind that conscience, not will, is the eye of faith, the organ of moral perception. . . . We believe, not in virtue of the credibility of the channel through which the revelation is presented, but in virtue of the inherent power of the revelation to compel our assent."

But it may be said that the operation of this faculty of conscience or spiritual intuition is not always certain, nor can it be in every case vindicated. That conscience may go wrong and become the excuse for persecution and tyranny is no more proof that it is unreliable than that illogical deductions prove reason to be unreliable. Reason, when normal and sane, cannot resist a geometric demonstration or a perfect syllogism; so also conscience, if we honestly listen to its voice, will pronounce rightly in every case of doubtful morality. It may also be asked, do we not constantly depend upon authority in the ordinary conduct of our lives, and why not therefore in the supreme concerns of religion? The answer is that we do not accept authority, even in little matters, if it be doubtful; and, if doubtful, we do examine, or, failing to examine, we

suffer by our negligence. And, how much more, then, is it our duty to assure ourselves of the credentials of authority in those greatest matters affecting our eternal interests. I am disposed to think that undue deference to the authority of great names has done much mischief in repressing originality in the products of Art. The poet has truly said, "My mind to me a kingdom is." The submission of it to any other, however it may have the look of humility, is too often a base abdication. The Anglo-Saxon race has become great because of its high ideal of personal liberty. The glory of Protestantism is the assertion of the right of private judgment.

I have adduced proofs of the errors, contradictions, and doubtful texts of the Bible for no other reason than to sustain my contention that the doctrine of its infallibility is no longer tenable. Nevertheless, I hope to be able to show that, instead of disparaging the Bible, I am really vindicating its true nature, and placing it on a higher platform and in a more serene atmosphere. No man desires to be praised for what he does not deserve, and no authors ask that to be attri-

buted to them which they have never claimed. The writers of the Bible would, I believe, be themselves the first to disclaim infallibility. If then we regard as proved that the Scriptures are errant, we must accept all the necessary deductions from the fact. Of these let me mention three. If inaccuracies occur in some parts, it follows that they may occur in other parts. If a single interpolation be discovered, it is no longer certain that there may not be many others. And again, God cannot be the author of the Scriptures in any literal sense, because He cannot be charged with error or untruth. Have the Scriptures then ceased to be the Word of God and to be without authority? And, if inspired, what is meant by their inspiration? In answering such questions, we are driven back to study anew their origin, purpose, and character.

In the first place, it must be said that God's revelation of Himself is necessarily by facts—the facts being those discoverable in His works of creation and those of history, more particularly the facts of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Of the latter, the Bible is the record only, not the facts them-

selves. Further, a little consideration will show that words by which alone the knowledge of facts can be conveyed to us are a fallible medium. For they are mobile; they vary and shift in their meaning. What a word represented centuries ago may to-day convey a different and even contrary meaning to that in the mind of the original user of it. God, therefore, could not Himself use the imperfect instrument of written language. Even if He wrote with an iron pen on tables of stone, and in every human dialect, men would misapprehend and wrest the intended truth. Worse than that, if we had explicit Divine documents of any sort they would become idols, interposing between us and God. Mr. Mirrlees says, "It is not my belief that the Spirit of God was *unable* to find a perfect letter. What I believe is that, in the exercise of perfect wisdom, the treasure was put in an earthen vessel for the very purpose that men might not give to a creature the reverence due only to the Creator. When we see how the Scriptures, even in their present imperfect form, are worshipped with a sort of idolatry

by multitudes of truly devout souls, we can readily understand how much more irresistible the temptation to such idolatry would have been if the Scriptures, in their outward form, had possessed absolute perfection." My own conviction is that we have in the Scriptures the very best means of God's communication to mankind of the knowledge of Himself, and of the duty He requires. By using many minds, in many successive ages, truth is presented on many sides, adapted to the varieties of human capacities, and accommodated to the conditions of men's attainments at every stage of these attainments. It may even be said that our vision of truth is, in some sense, stereoscopic, by which two or more views, really different, coalesce into one rounded whole. So far as inaccuracies occur in respect of physical, historical, or arithmetical facts, they are attributable to the writers and the state of knowledge of their age, not to God. The correction of these errors, or the premature disclosure of scientific knowledge, would have caused distrust in minds unprepared for such correction and disclosure,

and so have weakened the credibility of the spiritual truths presented. This consideration explains to me Christ's acquiescence in many current popular beliefs, and absolves me from the obligation to accept as literal fact what is said of demoniacal possessions and the like.

But the Bible is said to be inspired. There is no such statement in the Bible itself. All it affirms is that "inspired writings are the gift of God." If then, the Bible be these inspired writings, what are we to understand by inspiration? It cannot be that the authors of them were mere submissive, unconscious media of thoughts and words suggested to them. Was it then something more than the impulse which compels the poet to sing, the inventor to contrive, the musician to embody his ideas in melodious forms? On such grounds alone no doubt much may be explained. The prophets of the Old Testament, glowing with feelings of hatred of falsehood, impiety, oppressions, and crimes, or fired with the assurance that beyond these present evils there lay eras of blessing for their own country and the whole

human race,—used language which, in their confidence of its approval by God, they felt justified in declaring to be His actual voice—"Thus saith the Lord." Every heart which shares the same emotions can and does respond with an unfaltering amen. The men who wrote the New Testament had been in direct contact with Christ, or, at least, with Christ's immediate disciples. Their vivid impressions of so great, so attractive, so phenomenal a personality must have aroused enthusiasm. Inspirations of that kind might need no higher explanation than the excitation of feelings of love, veneration, and gratitude. But we have reason to believe that it is more than this. For we have still to account for mysterious influences which men in all times have attributed to the presence in their souls of the Divine Spirit. We can speculate with some measure of safety on the action of a faculty of conscience or intuition, because we can appeal to it as innate and universally acknowledged; but, if we go beyond this, we enter a region where reason cannot have the same verification. Nevertheless, there are experiences

in the consciousness of many men—flashes of insight, strange stirrings of emotion—which they could only refer to some source outside their own minds. The testimony of such men seems sufficient to warrant the belief in special intimations being conveyed to specially receptive minds. This, I think, is made credible by analogies in the natural world. Some breeds of animals are endowed with senses so abnormal in their strength—the bloodhound with scent, the vulture with vision—as to appear to us supernatural. What is animal instinct: those impulses by which birds build their nests, sit patiently on their eggs, migrate from one latitude to another? Men of science may talk of "natural selection" and "intelligent adjustment," and this, after all, is very much like affixing a label and calling it knowledge, but no explanation is satisfactory to my mind which ignores the immanence of the Divine Upholder. There is therefore nothing unreasonable in expecting that certain races of men would be endowed with special qualities. This was eminently the case with the Jews, who, just as the Greeks excelled in the domain of art

and philosophy, and the Romans in that of law and government, were possessed with exceptional powers of spiritual perception. These analogies also afford the presumption that there have always been men qualified to be recipients of Divine communications, and that, even now, the pages of the Bible may be made to shine with Divine illumination.

The exigency of my argument has made it necessary to give prominence to the contradictions and errors which are certainly found in the Bible. But let us keep this in mind, that inaccuracies in the records of the events do not invalidate the substantial truth of the events themselves. If they did, there is little history we could believe. We have no doubt that the Norman Conquest of England, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the French Revolution, have all occurred, although the accounts of them differ. Many of the alleged incidents of so recent an event as the battle of Waterloo are still subjects of dispute. In the same way, the great outstanding facts of New Testament history are not disturbed by discrepancies in

the details of the narratives. To attach undue importance to these discrepancies has the effect of creating a false perspective. The most glorious landscape may be momentarily concealed by holding up some petty object close to the eyes. So may the grandeur of the Scriptures be obscured. I shall not attempt their eulogy. Let me quote briefly from the writings of other men. Ruskin says, "The Bible contains plain teaching for men of every rank of soul and state of life, which, so far as they honestly and implicitly obey, they will be happy and innocent to the utmost powers of their nature, and capable of victory over all adversities, whether of temptation or pain." Sir William Jones, the great oriental scholar, says, "The Bible contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books in whatever age or language they have been written." Whatever may be thought of these estimates, it remains for ever true, that, in respect to its subject, the Bible stands supreme over all literatures. It

is, in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "the Book." The very negligence of details in the narratives, and, more particularly in the biographies of Jesus, gives it an air of artlessness, candour, and truth. It might even be said that, as the foibles of a friend, by which we feel that he shares our common frailty, makes him all the more dear to us, so the Bible becomes the more real and familiar by the slight blemishes we discover due to its necessarily human elements. When I compare the writings of the Old Testament with the mythologies, the poetry and philosophy of Greece and Rome, the superiority of the Holy Scriptures in respect to spiritual insight is nothing short of marvellous. Whence came the purity of their ethics; whence the conception of one Divine Being regarding His creatures with pity as a father his children; whence the consciousness of sin; whence, with so little clear hope of immortality, the ability to trust in a God so dimly apprehended? I can find no explanation but in the reality of some special supernatural inspirations. When I think how the portrait of Christ has in the New

Testament been presented so as to fill the minds of the greatest thinkers in all past years and never more than in our own time; when I consider the absence from them of essential errors, their silence and reserve, their avoidance of extravagant speculative excursions, I feel persuaded that the Scriptures, explain it how we may, were written under some guiding and restraining influence which can only be attributed to the Holy Spirit of God. "Above all," says Archbishop Leighton, "still cling to the incomparable spring of light and Divine comfort, the Holy Scriptures, even in despite of all doubts concerning them."

FIFTH AND SEVENTH ARTICLES

THE Fifth Article affirms God to be the Sovereign Disposer of the lives of men, the Seventh affirms that their wills are free. The former is no more than the statement of a fact of which each one of us is the instance, the latter is no more than the statement of a fact of which each one of us is certainly conscious. We are male or female, natives of one country and not of another. Over such conditions in our destiny we have had no control whatever. And still more important to happiness and welfare, our endowments of body and mind differ. We may be born of virtuous ancestry, or be the offspring of vicious parents; our environments may have been those of a happy home, or those of a city slum. But it does not follow that favouring circumstances always tend

to good, and adverse circumstances to evil. As a matter of common observation, it is often otherwise. The publicans and sinners, whose case seems desperate, we are told can repent and enter the kingdom of heaven. Of Judas Iscariot, around whom were the highest influences for good, Christ could say in those saddest of words, "It were better for that man that he had never been born." For all of us there is an area within which we have room for choice. The respectable man, as Judas undoubtedly was, may in the end choose the evil; the once depraved man, as the publican was regarded, may in the end choose the good. This fact of free will is plainly recognised throughout the Scriptures. We are invited to ask, that we may receive, and we cannot think of God as using the language of irony and insult in inviting us to do that which we are powerless to do. Christ is said to "stand at the door and knock." His entering depends upon our opening. He "would have gathered His countrymen, as a hen gathers her chickens, but they would not." The theory of man's impotence of will, and that he is incapable of movement towards God, seems to rest on

the commendable desire to give God all the glory of man's salvation; but it is not easy to see how we can rob God of any of that glory by attributing to man the simple powers of asking and receiving. On the other hand, the nullification of man's will makes him an automaton, and deprives God of the glory of the creation of a being made in His own image, capable of will. Against a fatalism which soothes the conscience to sleep, it cannot be too much insisted that the will of man is free. There is no barrier outside himself to his using it rightly or wrongly. Conscience is sounding notes of alarm within the breast of every man, and if he feels that he is drifting downwards to an abyss, he is still able to cry for help. How could God's willingness to give that help be more strongly expressed than in His assurance that His love to men surpasses our love to our children. I believe in a predestination which determines the general issues of the scheme of man's creation, and of the conditions which surround the birth of all creatures, but I do not believe in a particular fiat or sentence which decrees the fate of each one of them. An eminent American clergyman, whom I have

had the pleasure of meeting—the Rev. Dr. Van-Dyke, of Princeton University—expresses his opinion in these strong words, "Nothing has been more effective in begetting and increasing doubts than the idea that Christian doctrine required us to believe that all events, good and evil, were foreordained by God. There is no such idea in the mind of Christ. On the contrary, He is the Great Liberator of men from the bondage of fatalism, and His invitation to all the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him is a Divine assurance that whosoever will may have eternal life." He adds, "After years of doubt and inward conflict, I have arrived at great peace and comfort in the unreserved acceptance of these teachings of Jesus. I do not believe that all things that happen are determined beforehand." Thinking and speaking as a man, I dare to say that I cannot see how God could have any interest in His own work of creation—and the work of creation is still in process—if every event was fixed and foreknown with the mechanical rigidity of irresistible immutable cause and effect. I can rather think of God as watching with solicitude the movement of every indi-

vidual soul as it hovers undecided between the allurements of evil and the incitements to good. If it were otherwise, and all choice known and settled, why need the angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner that repenteth? and how much is their sympathy enforced by its singular object, the one sinner. While asserting that there are contingencies in the lives of all men within which their wills are free to operate, I do not wish to suggest that God does not overrule the actions of men and make them subservient to His own purposes. But He does so without encroaching on their freedom of will. Indeed, it may be said that God's will is the safeguard and guarantee of man's. This has been well illustrated by the analogy of a game of chess, which has laws fixing the powers, movements, and value of each piece. Within these laws the players act freely. Yet the master player can always win, however free be the play of his weak opponent. Thus similarly God's laws in the universe are fixed, and, because fixed and known to be fixed, man is able to make them the instruments of his free agency. God, whose knowledge is absolute, can still, like the master player,

control all the issues of man's will without interfering with the will itself. That mankind have been left, as I have said in my notes on natural theology, to work out their own salvation on the lines of material progress affords the presumption that, equally on the lines of spiritual progress, we must work out our own salvation; that just as we painfully acquire the knowledge by which we escape the evils of disease, of ignorance, of political disorder and the like, so must we strive to escape the evils of sin, accepting or rejecting the offers of pardon for its guilt and of help to overcome its power which are addressed to our reason and conscience. "We must agonise to enter the narrow door."

SIXTH ARTICLE

THE future judgment of all men and their eternal fate is the subject of the Sixth Article. Towards this perplexing question, saddening and even appalling from the orthodox point of view, my attitude has been this—when we find in the Scriptures two different and conflicting series of statements, I feel perfectly at liberty to choose between them. One series relating to this subject points to the infliction of eternally continuous and irremediable woe, the other to an adjustment of punishment to the degree of unrepented sin or transgression. Punishment which is eternal in duration cannot be an adjustment. Therefore I place my belief on those passages of the Bible which affirm an adjustment—graduation of punishment to the offence. According to St. Luke, Christ

has said that "he who knew his Lord's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes, and he that knew it not with few stripes." St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans says, "that every man shall be judged according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil." These representations find an answering assent from reason and conscience: all others which predicate, or appear to predicate, eternity of torture are instinctively rejected as inconsistent with any true idea of our Creator as a Heavenly Father. In the right I claim to judge the New Testament itself, I feel compelled to say that any other words attributed to Christ which seem to imply unending misery were not spoken exactly as they are reported. The awful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels;" "These shall go into eternal punishment," are written in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew. In the preceding chapter it is recorded that Christ declared that "this generation [the generation evidently He was then addressing and no other] shall not pass away till all these things [viz.: His coming in the clouds

of heaven with power and great glory] be accomplished." If this be a prediction which has not been fulfilled, and never can now be fulfilled, it proves that St. Matthew misunderstood what was actually said of a second coming, and proves also that he may have equally misunderstood what was said of the fate of the wicked. For myself, I see no escape from this dilemma; these passages are either literally true which does violence to conscience; or, their accuracy, as reported, is so doubtful as in no way to bind our beliefs. But by our acceptance of the latter alternative we do not annul the authority of the Scriptures. We must collate and catch the spirit of their entire contents. We must rest our faith upon their revelation as a whole. Above all, we may attain to the assurance that God is righteous, holy, and good: that He is our Father, in whose love we may have perfect confidence. If we have this confidence, our eternal future need not cause us either anxiety or dismay. Even should it be partly disciplinary or punitive, we can still say with heartfelt acquiescence, then it must be the best for us. If this be valid reasoning, it shows

the absurdity of prayers and masses for the dead: for why should we wish to shorten the remedial duration and rigour of a purgatory, if there be such a place?

EIGHTH ARTICLE

In my first draft of this most difficult proposition, I had written "we apprehend Christ to be Divine," but I soon came to see that this term Divine is too indefinite, and that we must choose between affirming Christ to be God incarnate or only a God-like or God-inspired man.

Many ancient religions have supposed an incarnation. In itself it is neither impossible nor incredible that God, the One and Eternal Being, should decree to come Himself among His human creatures in order to teach them necessary truths, and rescue them from evils which threatened their destruction. Such an advent, if it actually occurred, must have been in some way extraordinary, striking, and abnormal. These conditions seem to have been

fulfilled in the life of Christ, who, instead of being an apparition of material grandeur, glory, power, and magnificence, came with the totally different transcendence of moral greatness—greatness in the height of its benignity of purpose, greatness in the depth of its submission to poverty, obloquy, suffering, and death. If such an incarnation as this be true it presents God in an absolutely new and otherwise impossible light—the light which comes from deeds done by Him for man, and not from mere assurances of His good will to man. Further, whatever potency or value may lie in these deeds as an atonement or reconcilement (call the effects of them by whatever name you will), the doing of them by God Himself, and not by any creature, however exalted, is infinitely enhanced. Such Divine procedure would afford an amazing illustration of the truth which is now gradually gaining lodgment in men's minds that "force is no remedy"; while its own fitness as a remedy is corroborated by the experience of many a parent, who finds that the most effective way to deal with wickedness in a child is to show the child how real is the suffering that

wickedness inflicts on the father or mother who loves it the most.

But here it will be asked, What meaning are we to attach to the word incarnation? Any attempt at definition brings us at once to the borders of a region into which science has scarcely advanced a step. What is spirit? Is it the same as soul, that principle of what we call life and is transmissible from parent to child? or is it something different and superadded? The material body grows, decays, and dissolves. Is spirit thus subject to change and destruction? We know that our spirits, whatever they be, are something other than the Spirit of God; for while in one sense we are within the Divine nature (for in God we live and move and have our being), in another and deeper sense we are outside the Divine nature, because we are certainly conscious that we have a personality which can be, and actually is, separate from, estranged, and even hostile to God. Of the connection of our Spirit with our body, or of its origin from a Creator, we are profoundly ignorant; but assuming the existence of spirits as distinct from matter, it is, to say the least, not incon-

ceivable that the Spirit of God, either separate or in union with the spirit of man, could, and really did, enter a human body in so true and complete a degree as to justify the language of St. Paul when he spoke of Jesus as the man "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But if this became fact, how are we to think of the person of Jesus Christ? I know that to many minds it appears a monstrous proposition to affirm that Christ is God, the Creator of the universe of which our earth, a star among other stars, is relatively no greater than a grain of sand on the sea-shore. But with the thought of the immeasurably vast we must carry in our minds the thought of the immeasurably minute. If, as we are told, "the very hairs of our head are all numbered," we are each of us the objects of Divine knowledge irrespective of comparisons of magnitude. What is immensity to an all-comprehending God? He may determine that there shall be no blot on all His fair universe, however small that blot may appear and however remote be the corner in which it occurs. Other worlds are doubtless inhabited, or being prepared for habitation, for their

existence without purpose or use is inconceivable. God, for anything we know, may, at due seasons, visit all of them in some specific, recognisable, personal way. The question of the reasonableness of the statement that He had so visited this world is the only one we need ask ourselves. The difficulty as to the Godhead of Christ may arise from unconsciously predicating of the human body of Jesus that which is only predicable of the infinite and eternal Spirit which was within that body. Christ, as the Son of man, was, in respect to His material form, non-existent before His birth, and so far a creature: Christ as the Son of God eternally existent was, in respect to the Divine Spirit which filled that material form, one with God. Language fails in a theme so transcendent. To say that Christ was one with God might mean no more than complete accord of character and purpose; but oneness has also the deeper meaning of part (defined in one of our Dictionaries to be "a portion or quantity of a thing not separated in fact but considered or mentioned by itself"), and oneness in this sense expresses more adequately that identity of substance and being which is

implied in the conception of incarnation. This subject will have further consideration when I come to examine the doctrine of the Trinity.

All such views are, however, little more than presumption and speculation. Have we, then, any positive ground for the belief that Christ, by general consent the morally greatest of men, the Reformer who more than any other has influenced and is still influencing the world, is an embodiment of God Himself? For the answer we are wholly dependent on the credibility of Christ's own testimony regarding Himself and upon the authenticity of the Scriptures themselves, which are the record of that testimony.

In the discussion of the Fourth Article I have tried to state the nature and extent of the authority of these Holy Scriptures. Let me only add that, while recent criticism has been saying, and is still saying, much that is supposed to be destructive, the results of it, so far as my understanding of them goes, are rather conservative and assuring. It has placed the genuineness of the documents beyond dispute; it has fixed approximately the dates of their composition; and has settled,

in nearly every case, the question of their authorship. The gain has, I believe, been a clearer grasp of the truth the Scriptures do contain, and the loss only the disturbance of cherished beliefs which had in them an element of mistake. The gain is permanent—the loss transient. The authority of the Book, in the sense of absolute verbal inerrancy, has passed away, but the authority of the Spirit of God in revealing its essential and infallible truth has been established. The literal authority dies—the spiritual remains.

Now, when we take a broad and comprehensive view of the four biographies of Christ, and of the letters written by His immediate disciples, there emerges a large clear personality so impressive in all its lineaments as, I think, is only explicable on the hypothesis of the incarnation—that we have in Christ not only a true man, with man's capacity of suffering, and (what I confess is more difficult to understand) man's comparative limitation of knowledge, but something more than man! What, then, is Christ's own testimony to His Divinity? The discovery of it to His disciples we learn was only gradual and consistent with

a character at once modest and humble, courageous and self-assured. He charged them to tell no man that He was the Christ, thus, as on other occasions, shunning distasteful notoriety; but when "the pharisees and doctors of the law were sitting by" He cured the palsied man, and fearlessly—blasphemously, as they believed—forgave him his sins. Finally, on His trial before Pilate, when He was adjured by the living God to speak plainly, He accepted the designation "Son of God" with full knowledge of the meaning attached to the title by His accusers and of the penalty of death which it involved. Throughout the whole of His career, except when as man He was expressing dependence on His heavenly Father, Christ's whole attitude to the men among whom He mingled was an assumption of Divinity. He taught morality with all the air of sovereignty and independence of precedent and antecedent authority. He, the simple Syrian peasant, proclaimed Himself the founder of a Kingdom which shall be everlasting and universal. He declared Himself to be the sole judge of all men. He not only claimed to be sinless Himself,

but He calmly took the power to forgive sin. In saying that the least kind deed done by one man to another is done to Him, He identified Himself with humanity as its federal head; in offering Himself as the rest for every soul that labours and is heavy laden, He implied a possession of infinite plenitude of grace; and in promising that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He was with them, He asserted omnipresence to the spirits of men in order to dispense that grace. He held up a standard of perfection without the slightest hint that He Himself needed help to attain to it or needed pardon for transgressing its ideals. Such language, if it came from lips which were no more than human, is astounding in its arrogance and in the sweep of its exaction. There are writers of books, such as Carlyle, Emerson, and Matthew Arnold, whose tone of dictation and of the superior person I resent, but their pretensions are utter feebleness when placed in comparison with Christ's demands of our personal submission and devotion, superseding even the ties of natural affection. That such demands and such self-assertion

have not been contemptuously rejected, but have been conceded by the general instincts of men in all ages, is itself a strong proof that Christ is not only man, but God.

That Christ's claims amounted to this, and were so understood by His contemporaries, is made evident by the violence of the anger and opposition of His enemies. The impression made on His friends is shown by incidents such as Peter's confession and that recorded in the 14th chapter of Matthew, where it is said that His disciples "worshipped him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." These incidents and Christ's own words, to which I have referred, are found in the first three Gospels. The fourth, which seems to be less a precise narrative than a treatise to show the ethical significance of the life of Christ, contains many others, from the testimony of Nathaniel at its beginning to that of doubting Thomas at its close. Of the rest of New Testament Scriptures there is no part which bears so complete a stamp of authenticity as the letters of St. Paul. His literary style is as distinct as that of Thucydides or Tacitus, and his personality is more warm with vitality

and individual character than any other author of antiquity. The trustworthiness and competency of such testimony cannot be impeached. Although it does not appear that he ever met our Saviour before His crucifixion, Paul had direct personal intercourse with the chief Apostles. "With Peter" it is said "he tarried fifteen days at Jerusalem." In full knowledge, therefore, of their beliefs, he accentuates the Divinity in words which are exact, emphatic, and indubitable. It is further sustained by Christ's own miraculous works and by His resurrection from the tomb.

Of the resurrection I need only say that the proof of it seems to be as strong as can be adduced for any historic event of that period, and I believe that no man of science will say otherwise than that such an alleged occurrence can be credited or discredited alone on the ground of evidence.

But let this much be said—I have just spoken of St. Paul's character. Surely as disclosed in his own letters, and as portrayed by the companion of his travels, it is transparent, consistent, and legible. Judging, then, by his access to the original sources of

information, we have an attestation to the fact of the resurrection which seems to me to be irrefragable. He asserts it incidentally, I have noticed, no less than nine times in the Epistle to the Romans. At the same time, it must with all candour be admitted that his mistaken assurance that the end of the world was close at hand suggests this doubt—it might be asked, was he not similarly mistaken in his belief that he himself, the disciples, and many others had seen the risen Saviour? The answer can only be that convictions which arise from actual contact are very different from convictions which are only inferences from words reported to have been spoken. In the region of the memory of such words, or of their true meaning there is wide room for misapprehension; in that of concrete fact verifiable by the bodily senses there can be no such room. No; I do not think that Paul's witness to the resurrection is made invalid by mistakes of opinion. He himself declares that some of his sayings are only personal opinions; he "gives his judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."

But let us look at the matter from another

point of view. If there had been no authentic sight of Christ's risen body in such objective shape as gave complete assurance of its identity, the infant society, humanly speaking, must have fallen to pieces. Its Master was crushed, His predictions falsified, His claims refused. The collapse was complete, the outlook nothing less than desperate. If the resurrection be a strain upon belief, equally great is the difficulty of believing that the society could have survived without its occurrence. Nothing but a miracle could have saved the situation, and the fact that the situation was saved goes far to prove that the miracle is also fact. Any suggestion that the companions of Christ were victims of hallucination or guilty of collusive misrepresentation is not worthy of a thought. This other remark may be made as to the miracles said to have been done during Christ's life. The doing of them may have been necessary in order to arrest attention. In our own day the speeches of obscure men, however able they be, remain long unnoticed. Only a few men gain the ear of the public. If, then, it was expedient that Christ should receive instant attention,

and that His ministry be short, that attention could only be got by acts which were conspicuous and impressive. The general question of the credibleness of miracles I propose to discuss when I reach the consideration of 12th Article of the Creed.

Christ's own belief in Himself, and the acceptance of that belief by men of His own time, involves for us three alternatives which may be stated in this way—might Christ not be a fanatical enthusiast, perfectly honest, but self-deceived; or, might He not be a clever, ambitious, impostor who had pride enough to blazon out His effrontery to the end; or, was He a man whose character has transparent notes of sanity, sincerity, and disinterestedness? The alternative of conscious wicked imposture may be dismissed at once, that of self-deception is at least deserving of examination. Hence, the supreme need of our closely studying what Christ's character really was. To speak in a paradox, I believe that we are nearer to Him now than were many of His own disciples. Never more than to-day are men's minds turning with intense interest to the story of His life. We inherit the results

of questionings, researches, and controversies which have extended over eighteen centuries. We can now judge the Author of the Christian religion by the achievements of that religion, and by the experiences of the men who through all these past generations have made it the rule of their lives. Let me quote some recent estimates of Christ's character. In a letter dated 29th September, 1869, addressed to Dr. James Martineau, Professor William Knight writes, "When I proceed to study as well as peruse the (Gospel) narratives their form becomes gradually of less and less significance to me, their origin or authorship of less moment, as I find myself in contact with a Personality immeasurably vaster than any other recorded in human history. And what most of all impresses me in 'the man Christ Jesus' is *a singular harmony of opposites*, a union of contrasted attributes, which I nowhere else behold or hear of. His character seems a focus where the rays of varied excellence, which are solitary or scattered in broken fragments in the lives of other men, meet together; and where some features which I do not see exemplified in the life of any

other member of the race, are to be seen. I find that He was in the profoundest sense holy, and yet He never repented or made confession of an error or a failing. But does not all human piety start from penitence, as human character is readjusted through experience of failure? The righteousness of Jesus is self-righteousness; and thus two things which are disparates in human morality seem blended in Him. Then I find the supremest self-assertion in alliance with the completest self-denial. The King of Men is the servant of the beggar on the highway. Next, I find the acutest sympathy with every phase of humanity, with the keenest antipathy and most sensitive recoil from everything that mars the ideal perfection of man. Again, in Christ there seems to me an absolute catholic universality in alliance with a strongly defined individuality. He is an Israelite, yet a citizen of the world; patriotic, yet cosmopolitan. Then He exhibits the serenest self-reliance, blent with absolute dependence on the Father. The active energies of our nature are in exquisite alliance with the passive virtues. There is perfect unworldliness without the

slightest tinge of asceticism; severity of moral purpose, with surpassing gentleness of spirit; the strength of completest manhood blent with the tenderness of ideal womanhood." George John Romanes, in his *Thoughts on Religion*, says, "When we come to consider what a large number of His sayings are recorded, it becomes most remarkable that in literal truth there is no reason why any of His words should ever pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete. 'Not even now could it be easy,' says John Stuart Mill, 'even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life.' Contrast Jesus Christ in this respect with other thinkers of like antiquity. Even Plato, who, though some 400 years B.C. in point of time, was greatly in advance of Him in respect of philosophic thought—not only because Athens then presented the extraordinary phenomenon which it did of genius in all directions never since equalled, but also because he, following Socrates, was, so to speak, the greatest representative of human reason in the direction of spirituality—even Plato, I

say, is nowhere in this respect as compared with Christ. Read the dialogues and see how enormous is the contrast with the gospels in respect of errors of all kinds—reaching even to absurdity in respect of reason, and to sayings shocking to the moral sense. Yet this is confessedly the highest level of human reason on the lines of spirituality when unaided by alleged revelation." Dean Farrar has written as follows in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "Even those who do not accept the Christian faith see in Jesus a unique and sinless personality, one with whom no other human being can even distantly be compared, either in His character, His teaching, or the results which He accomplished by His brief ministry. He accepted the most ordinary customs of the teachers of His day. He wore no broad phylacteries like the Pharisees; He was not emaciated with asceticism like the Essenes; He preached the Kingdom of God, not, as John had done, between the gloomy precipices of the wilderness, but from the homely platform of the synagogue. He came eating and drinking; He had no human learning; His rank was but that of a village

carpenter; He checked all political excitement; He directed that respect should be paid to all the recognised rulers, whether heathen or Jewish, and even to the religious teachers of the nation; He was obedient to the Mosaic law; His followers were 'unlearned and ignorant men' chosen from the humblest of the people. Yet He has, as a simple matter of fact, altered the whole current of the stream of history; He closed all the history of the past, and inaugurated all the history of the future, and all the most brilliant and civilised nations of the world worship Him as God. Kant testifies to His ideal perfection. Hegel saw in Him the union of the human and divine. Even the most advanced of sceptics do Him homage. Spinoza spoke of Him as the truest symbol of heavenly wisdom. The beauty and grandeur of His life overawed even the flippant soul of Voltaire. 'Between Him and whoever else in the world,' said Napoleon at St. Helena, 'there is no possible term of comparison.' 'If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage,' said Rousseau, 'the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.'

'He is,' says Strauss, 'the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion, the Being without whose presence in the mind, perfect piety is impossible.' 'The Christ of the Gospels,' says Renan, 'is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms. His beauty is eternal. His reign will never end.' John Stuart Mill spoke of Him as 'a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue.'

"He alone of mankind has claimed to be sinless, and has had the claim granted by unanimous consent both in His lifetime and in subsequent ages. He alone among men has never even been assailed by the breath of moral calumny, and never even in His most sacred utterances and prayers betrayed the faintest consciousness of any evil as present in His soul.

"Of the originality of His teaching," Farrar continues, "it stands alone in its breadth and in its power, in its absence of narrow exclusiveness and scholastic system and abstract speculation. It was fresh, simple,

natural, abounding in illustrations at once the most beautiful and the most intelligible, drawn from all the common sights and sounds of nature, and all the daily incidents and objects of social and domestic life. There is never in them a lurking fallacy nor a superfluous word, but all is 'vivacity, nature, intelligibility, directly enlightening grace,' intended only to convince and to save."

More recently the Rev. Hensley Henson, Vicar of St. Margaret's and Canon of Westminster, writes, "Christ was prophet, teacher, master, friend, son, neighbour, citizen, sufferer, victim, martyr, and in all these and a hundred other descriptions He unfolded His character, severe yet tender, chaste, loving, infinitely wise and profoundly sympathetic, lofty, righteous, merciful—a character the influence of which upon others was the very breath of the Spirit of God, which awed and allured and purified and kindled men, claimed and received the homage of their consciences, stirred and helped the affections of their hearts, moved them to obedience and by inevitable stages to adoration. They knew it was human; they felt it was Divine. When He claimed

to be, in unique and sovereign sense, Son of God, they owned and confessed the claim to be true."

These delineations of the character of Christ do not seem to me to be strained or overdrawn. Rather they fall short of the impressiveness of the last hours of His human life. How pathetic are its incidents told in the simple unheated words of His biographers; the scene in the garden, the desertion of the disciples, His loneliness among his enemies. How naturally He shrinks as a man from the torture He knew awaited Him, how dignified His silence before Pilate and Herod, how consistent with the declared purpose and intention of His voluntary submission to death is His forgiving spirit to the agents who executed His unjust sentence! The point, however, which I wish to emphasise is that, in the story of Christ's life, from beginning to end, we have the exhibition of a man so calm, so well balanced in mind, so self-restrained and self-possessed in every exigency, as to preclude all suggestions of His acting under the influence of false enthusiasm, delusion, or self-deception, and

that therefore His competency as a witness to His own Divine Being cannot be set aside.

Christ is said to be the second Person of the Trinity. My reasons for avoiding the use of the word Trinity are that it does not occur in Scripture, and that the definitions of it are misleading. If I now examine for myself the grounds upon which this doctrine of the Trinity is supposed to rest, I shall try to do so in the spirit of sincere desire to arrive at such truth as may be attainable. We do indeed "see as through a glass darkly." Still, so far as we can think at all, let us at least think reasonably.

Having regard to the necessity that the discovery of sublime truth must be accommodated to the recipient minds of men in all stages of their capacity, I cannot see that, if Christ be Divine in the most exact and literal sense, He could take a more fitting title than the Son of God. In fact, I can think of no other. It asserts community of nature with God, and was so regarded by His countrymen. To have abruptly announced Himself to be God when He was visibly man would have raised difficulties to recognition and acknow-

ledgment. By using the two names, Son of God and Son of Man, the fact of the incarnation would be gradually suggested to His followers. But surely the name, Son of God, must have been regarded by them as figurative, not real, just as our own relationship to our Heavenly Father is not literal, but by "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." But very early in the history of the Church theologians seem to have caught the idea of a literal relationship between the Father and Son, which they conceived to have been from all eternity. They conceived also the Holy Spirit as a distinct self-existent Being from all eternity, not as the Holy Spirit of God Himself, fulfilling a special function, continuing and applying invisibly to the spirits of men the salvation visibly wrought by Christ while He was on earth. Hence was evolved the doctrine of the Trinity. This is defined in our Scottish Presbyterian Shorter Catechism "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Elsewhere I find it defined as "one substance in three

persons, of which the first eternally generates the second, and the third eternally proceeds from the first and second." Is not this language derogatory? Is it even intelligible? The Athanasian creed is still more distinct in saying that "the Father is God," "the Son is God"—"The Father eternal, the Son eternal." Is not this a contradiction of terms and an abuse of words? For how can a Son be eternal? Moreover, to say that "the Father is made of none," the "Son begotten," the "Holy Ghost proceeding," suggests degrees of priority and rank which is inconsistent with the idea that "the whole three persons are co-equal." As the relationship between God the Father and God the Son cannot be actual and at the same time eternal without the utmost violation of human speech, surely we are forced to accept the alternative that the terms, Father and Son, are used in a metaphorical, conventional, or federal sense;—as an accommodation, condescendence, or subserviency to human thought;—not as inherent essential conditions eternally subsisting, but only as a connection of resemblance assumed in time for a specific purpose, and lasting only till that purpose is

fulfilled. Seeing that God is one Being, infinite, and omnipresent, it follows that the Son is the Father and that the Father is the Son. This indeed is asserted by Christ Himself in His answer to Philip (John xiv. and 9), "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I am in the Father and the Father in me." Man, being finite, local, and temporal, is under the necessity to think of a Father as in heaven, of Christ as having been a Son on earth, and of a Holy Spirit as within the consciences of men; but to an omnipresent God there may be no such persons or places. In the same dependent way, we think of sequence in events, of past, present, and future, but to an eternal God there may be no such thing as time. To say, in the words of the Athanasian creed, "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods, but one God," sounds like an assertion and a denial in one breath, and I believe has had the effect of leading men to think of God as three distinct entities, not as one entity;—to think of Him as they would think of a triumvirate among human beings. I have read, some years ago, an article in the

Contemporary Review, written by a professor of Divinity, in which it was attempted to be shown that a Trinity was a necessity in the Divine constitution in so far that each member of it becomes the object of love, the one to the other, and in this way fills an idea of social existence. Far more reasonable than a view so purely anthropomorphic, and more worthy, seems to me to be the conception of God as one Being acting on three lines of conduct, under three names, which are in some measure descriptive of three distinct functions. Is there not something analogous to this in our customary speech? A man may be known not only by his familiar birth name but by official titles such as mayor of his town, chairman of a board of directors, colonel of a Volunteer regiment. In one capacity he may even oppose himself in another capacity. As mayor he may refuse a request which as chairman of a railway company he had made to the municipal council. "Persons" in such a sense as this seems to me to be the only admissible meaning we can attach to the word as applied to the names of the Divine Being.

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EIGHTH ARTICLE

But is this view coherent with the Holy Scriptures? I shall refer only to a few of the more explicit statements on the subject which are chiefly to be found in St. John's Gospel and in St. Paul's Epistles. The opening verse in the gospel appears to point to some kind of separate existence of Christ prior to the incarnation. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him"—(the unseen God). St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians speaks of "Christ Jesus being in the form of God," or, as I understand the Greek may by rendered, "Christ Jesus, being originally God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God." Again, in his first letter to the Corinthians he says, "When all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him that God may be all in all." The language of St. Paul suggests a separate existence of Son and Father before the incarnation, because any assertion of equality implies a duality of persons. On the other hand, a

delegation to the Son by the Father of creative power, and a subsequent resignation of that power, and an absorption into the one God implies a restoration to a unity that had been, as it were, for some special purpose, temporarily suspended. St. John's designation of Christ as "the Word" is not completely trustworthy in so far that it betrays a submission to the influence of Philo of Alexandria, whose speculations were widely known in the first century of our era, and who, following to some extent Plato and the Stoics, conceived of God as separate from a totality of mediating forces he called the Reason, or the Logos or Word.

The truth seems to be that the more we try to discover what the Scriptures actually do teach, the more are we perplexed and confused. But their silence may be providential. A curtain may wisely be drawn across our sight. Is it, however, of any practical importance that we can only approach a little way towards the solution of the problem of the Divine nature, and of some possible mysterious communion within that nature? Why attempt to formulate a dogma where definition must be

futile? What is required of us is to believe that God in Jesus Christ suffered with and for men in order to assure them of His love and of His willingness to give His Holy Spirit to help them in all purposes of new obedience.

I am aware that the views towards which I lean may be called Sabellian, a heresy condemned by the early Church. But from all we know of the measure of enlightenment, and even the standard of morals of those days, I do not think that this decision need give us any concern. My object in the discussion has not been exhaustive exposition, but to disclose its difficulties so far as may justify my contention that a doctrine of a Trinity should have no place in any creed.

NINTH ARTICLE

As the Eighth Article tries to discern what we may believe truly of God, the Ninth Article tries to state how we may effectively hold that belief.

My comment on these two aspects of faith, the intellectual and the moral, may be best expressed in the following words which I wrote several years ago to a young relative who could not accept the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ: "You say in the outset of your letter to me that the difference between us is of the most *vital* character. So it is in a sense in which Christ, a created being, and Christ Himself the Creator, are infinitely apart. But in case you attach a very literal meaning to the word *vital*, let me say that I cannot allow myself to feel sure that it is *vital* in respect

to our relations to God and to our future destiny.. We are saved by faith, as is said and as I believe, but who can measure faith subjectively or objectively? I would not dare to limit it to any absolute knowledge of Christ's true being and nature, and so I would never judge and exclude those who differ from me if their hearts and character are truly influenced by such knowledge as they do possess. Faith is certainly not the iteration of any formula, however correct. It is rather the interpenetration of truth. The permeation of a partial truth will effect that which will never be effected by a whole truth which has received only a languid, unreal assent. I say this partly with reference to your expression of wonder how Christians, so called, can live as they do. No, none of us lives up to what our beliefs imply. We don't 'take it in,' as you say. In other words we have scarcely any real faith. . . . Christ Himself has said, 'He that keeps my commandments loves me, and I will manifest myself to him.' If you and I, C——, so love Christ, I believe that in time I, as it may be in my errors, you, as it may be in yours, will each arrive at a nearer

approach to the truth as to what we are to understand of His person." To these words I now add that, as it needs no astronomy to enjoy the warmth and light of the sun, so the love of Christ may enter into and renovate hearts untroubled with the subtleties of theology. "Surely," says Thomas à Kempis, "an humble husbandman that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher that, neglecting himself, laboureth to understand the courses of the heavens." The faith of Abraham could not be faith in Christ, and the faith of many men may never be more than Abraham's faith. They put their trust in God as on a rock midst the shifting sands of opinions. To them Christ is still saying, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The Ninth Article states all that I think need be said of the ethics of Christianity. It gives no room for merit or reward. Reward is gratuitous, and can never be ours by right. The obedience required by Christianity is founded on love, that by other religions on fear. The one is spiritual, the other legal. The spiritual is freedom and joy; the legal unwilling restraint and dependence on the

fulfilment of obligation. Because the spiritual fails, and is always felt to fail, in efforts to reach the height of its own ideals, it is more difficult of attainment than the legal, and all thought of desert can never be other than repugnant.

TWELFTH ARTICLE—PRAYER

MANY *a priori* arguments may be urged to prove that prayer is unreasonable. The reign of law may be said to be co-extensive with all we know of Nature, and immutable in all within that territory. Extreme Calvinistic theology may assert that every event, even the most minute, is foreknown and predestined, and is therefore unalterable by any emotions of ours. There are even statements in Scripture which may appear to show the futility of requests from man to God, such as Christ's reminder that "your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask Him." But any view of law in nature or fatalism in theology which makes the order of events unchangeable is, I believe, neither consistent with true science nor sound theology. There are doubtless in the

physical sphere forces which, from our observing the constancy of their sequence, we speak of as being fixed and inflexible, such as the daily and yearly circuits of the earth in the solar system, but there are others whose activity may remain for a time in suspense, or the course of whose activity may be deflected by the interference of other forces. But not only so, these physical forces can be traversed by others which are psychical. The human will is one of such psychical forces. By knowledge slowly acquired, man can change the face of nature. He turns the laws of matter to his own use. He discovers, for example, the potentiality of coal, or he chemically combines substances whose enormous strength become his agents for utility or destruction. The decision of one man may originate movements which have far-reaching consequences. The student in his closet, the commander in the battlefield, the king from his cabinet, may determine matters which change the whole current of history.

If the will of man be thus operative on wide stages such as these, it may equally be operative in the narrow arenas of our daily lives. We seize or neglect opportunities. A hasty word

of ours may set in motion causes for good or ill far beyond our intentions. If, then, it is in the power of all of us to exercise control over external and material conditions, how much greater and all-embracing must be the energy of the Divine Will. Without altering any of His own laws, He has infinite knowledge of their limitations, contingencies, and susceptibility to direction. And so it is that, in ways far beyond our ken—it may be circuitously or protractedly—it may not be literally, but substantially—He is able to fulfil the desires of those who put their trust in His goodness.

To those who believe in a Divine revelation, the fact that prayer is commanded is proof enough that it is consistent with God's government of the world—that He is not bound by inexorable rules—that even He may be swayed by ardent cries for help, guidance, or relief. But the value of prayer is not only the liberty to petition. It becomes the occasion of a true intercourse with God. Had we been denied access to Him as suppliants; had we been told that our requests were, in the order of the constitution of the

world, unavailing, we should not have dared to bring to Him our doubts and fears, our gratitude and love, nor could we have received the assurance, which we do receive, that, in some inscrutable way, there is a response from Heaven. Here, if anywhere, we enter the region of faith. And by faith I do not mean that which is contrary to reason, but what reason alone cannot verify. This communion —this "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"—as St. John calls it, cannot be certified to others, but has been very real in the experience of multitudes of men and women in all ages.

Closely allied to these considerations of the reasonableness of prayer is the difficult subject of the credibility of the miraculous. To believe in prayer—that is to believe in the possibility of particular interventions in answer to prayer—is virtually to believe in miracles, but in miracles unseen and unverifiable. Have there then been interventions in past history which were seen and verifiable and called miracles, in so far that the deeds reported were abnormal and contrary to all experience? The answer turns upon two

points, namely, their antecedent probability, and the sufficiency of credible evidence. If the advent of Christ be fact and His supreme claims be established, we have at once grounds for the expectancy that many circumstances would, or at least, might be concomitants such as would be unusual and extraordinary. I believe that such acts were done by Jesus, and that they are the more credible because the doing of them was in harmony with His character, and because the acts themselves were illustrations of His mission. Assuming, however, that Christ's claims have not been established (for, of course, to prove His claims by His miracles, and to prove the miracles by the validity of His claims, would be to reason in a circle), it may be said that the miracles attributed to Christ are antecedently improbable in as much that any infraction of the laws of God is incompatible with the character and purpose of their Author. But how do we know what are and what are not such infractions? There may be laws which include other laws, and there may be a higher law which intervenes to modify, suspend, or control a lower. Men are

performing acts now, visibly and indubitably, which, if the causes of them were withheld and concealed, would be called miracles.

It happens that as I ponder over this subject the flames of my library fire are reflected into the middle of foliage which is seen through a plate glass window. This suggests how easy it may be for an unseen agent outside ourselves to have caused the appearance of the burning bush, or by the deflection of the rays of light, the appearance of the sun standing still. I am not in the least concerned whether such appearances really occurred or are only poetic hyperbole or apostrophe. Illusions such as those of sight we now understand, but there may be illusions of the other senses, and also power of vivid suggestion, which we do not now understand. And herein may lie the explanation of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. It may have been real to the mental impressions of the observers, as in the cases of Moses and Joshua, and yet not be literal fact. Christ might have had at His disposal latent resources of which we know nothing. He is said to have raised the dead. We in these modern days restore life, hours

after its apparent extinction, to men and women rescued from drowning.

When we come to the question of sufficiency of evidence we are wholly dependent on the New Testament documents. These, unhappily, do not carry to my mind conviction in the case of every miracle. For instance, St. Matthew tells us that immediately on the death of Jesus "the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised and appeared unto many." This is an occurrence so stupendous, and at the same time so likely to have excited attention, that the absence of any mention of it by other writers weakens, if it does not invalidate, St. Matthew's testimony. On the other hand, it may be said that if the credibility of an alleged event be measured by the greatness of the concurrent circumstances, then no event, however prodigious, is absolutely incredible viewed in connection with the death of Christ, if Christ be, as the Roman Centurion felt impelled to exclaim, the Son of God. The evangelists were naturally eager to collect every scrap of the floating memories of Christ's career. It is well that they were thus eager,

for much has been preserved which otherwise might have been lost. We must make large allowance for the simple, uncritical character of the writers of the Gospels, for "the inexactitude, bias, and exaggerations" which were the characteristics of ancient literatures, and expect that incidents were included in their narratives which probably were distorted in the course of oral transmission. With all deductions of what is doubtful, I believe that enough remains to show that Christ did many wonderful works, which were beneficent in their own nature and demonstrations of Divine power.

Mr. Mirrlees' opinion is that "a miracle seems an operation of that mysterious power called Will—whether of brutes, of men, or of God—whereby the current of events is diverted from the course it would otherwise have taken. So far from this being a contravention of the laws of nature, the more a man is conversant with these laws the more powerful will be the operation of his will. The will of the brute, to a limited extent, disturbs what would otherwise be the routine of nature; the will of man disturbs this routine to a much

greater extent; and surely analogy would lead us to suppose that the will of God would disturb this routine in an infinitely greater measure and yet be as perfectly in harmony with the unchangeable laws of nature as when a horse makes a load go up a hill."

Again, he adds, "it is often said that it is altogether out of the question to suppose that God will alter the course of nature merely to oblige a single individual. Prayer, however, is a moral force. In the material world, the most stupendous results may ensue from the most insignificant operations; a child pulling a trigger may lay a city in ruins. So in the spiritual world, even a child's prayer may set in action moral forces powerful enough to save a Sodom from destruction."

ELEVENTH AND THIRTEENTH ARTICLES

THE Eleventh and Thirteenth Articles of the Creed, which deal with the nature and constitution of Christian Churches, are very largely the subjects of the letters to Mr. Southwell, which are appended. The views therein expressed have been in nowise changed, but rather have been confirmed by subsequent reflection and by the lessons of the present ecclesiastical troubles in Scotland. I have been coming more and more to the conviction—to say it bluntly—that no association of Christian men, large or small, of recent or of ancient origin, is, strictly speaking, a Church of Christ, or even a branch of it. Christ has but one Church, the Kingdom of God, the Church invisible over which He is

head. Over any visible organised society He is not the head. Over individual members of Christian societies He is, of course, the head, but over the society as such He is not the head. This view is, I think, sustained by the fact that in the whole four Gospels the word "Church" seems to be purposely avoided, the phrase "the Kingdom of God" occurring 112 times, and that of "Church" only twice. These latter are found in St. Matthew only. In the 18th chapter of that Gospel the word clearly means the congregation or local synagogue. In the 16th chapter it occurs in connection with St. Peter's confession, and the declaration that on Peter will Christ build His Church. But even in this solitary case, where church could be said to be the equivalent to kingdom, there are not wanting suspicions that the promise to Peter may be an unwarranted addition. For, in the first place, neither St. Mark nor St. Luke, who both mention the incident of the confession, say anything of the promise; and, in the second place, St. Matthew's Gospel is said to have been written originally in the Aramaic dialect, of which our present Gospel is a comparatively

late translation into Greek. We are moreover confronted with the questions, is it probable that Christ would condescend to speak with "play" upon the words Petros and petra even if that was possible in His native language; or, is it not more probable that such "play" upon words was a temptation to which the translator or a late transcriber yielded? I have never heard the suggestion made, but from all these points of view, there seems to me a strong presumption that the proud legend "Tu es Petrus et supra hanc petram, aedificabo meam ecclesiam" which surrounds in huge letters the inner rim of the dome of St. Peter's at Rome is founded on an unwarranted or fraudulent interpolation.

I agree with Mr. Mirrlees when he writes, "These organisations of Christians called churches are merely human institutions, and like all human institutions, they operate for good or evil very much according to the spirit of the individuals who direct their affairs for the time being." That Christ cannot be identified with any human Church is evident enough from the consideration that He would thereby become a partaker with the deeds of

that Church. He could not be the Head of the Church which condoned the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Church which burned Servetus, or the Church which was an abettor in the murder of the young Edinburgh divinity student in 1696. Throughout all the history of Christendom this confusion of thought—this identification of the outward and concrete with the inward and spiritual—has prevailed until now. It began with the usurped primacy of the Church of Rome and its elaboration of a false theory of unity. Even after the Reformation it found expression in the attempt to enforce uniformity of worship in the time of Edward the Sixth, and in the imposition of Episcopacy upon Scotland in the time of the Stewarts. To this day we have a survival in Church establishments, in as much as they sprang from the conception that every nation should have one dominant religious belief. Happily, there have been disintegrating forces at work. Schisms and secessions have not always been the evil that is supposed, but rather a good, in so far as they have been a check upon religious bodies which, strong in their arrogation to themselves

of being Divine institutions, have been a danger to liberty. The unity we need, and which we should ever try to promote, whether by incorporation or without it, is that of charity and peace, toleration and mutual forbearance, which are attributes of that true Church wherein there is "neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female (Episcopalian nor Presbyterian, Methodist nor Baptist, Unitarian nor Trinitarian), for all are one in Christ Jesus."

Troubles and difficulties have inevitably arisen from our having, in the words of Mr. Mirrlees, "neglected to root out that fundamental doctrine of the Church of Rome which teaches that the spiritual kingdom over which Christ is Head is an outward visible corporate society." The failure to preserve the distinction has led to many extravagances of speech. The phrase "Headship of Christ" is sometimes used to justify acts and decisions which may be right, but possibly may be wrong. That the Courts of Justice should place a Church on the same level with any voluntary association is scouted as an insult. Mr. Mirrlees' views are more in accordance

with Christian humility when he says, with reference to the Cardross case in 1860:—"I do not see any meaning in the great outcry about the danger to the spiritual liberties of a Christian society from its being looked on as a temporal association. As regards liberty of internal management, take the instance of a steam navigation company, which acknowledges itself to be a temporal society; and yet no one ever supposes that on this account its purity of discipline is interfered with. If the directors depose one of their captains from his office before the expiry of his engagement, or for holding unsound views on the principles of navigation, does any one think that the liberties of the company are endangered because the captain has the privilege of seeking the protection of the courts of law?"

What also can the phrase "spiritual independence" mean in a country such as ours where we enjoy perfect freedom of opinion, and perfect freedom of association, but a claim of immunity from the restraints of civil law when that law interposes to maintain civil rights? The Church of England, and the

Church of Scotland freely elaborated statements of their fundamental beliefs or creeds, and freely entered into alliance with the State. Obviously, neither of them can change these creeds without the consent of their partner the State. The Houses of Parliament, in appointing two years ago a Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, were therefore doing no more than causing inquiry to be made as to alleged failures of the Church of England to keep the terms of the alliance. Free Churches are not subject to any such interference, and are under no obligation to ask the consent of the State for any change of their Creeds, but they are under obligation to their own members, just as in the case of all other voluntary associations. If they have no clause in their deed of association which provides for the contingency of change, they cannot alter their creeds in any essential degree without endangering the tenure of their property. If a change has been made, and, by the neglect of safeguards, the property is lost, the majority by whom it has been lost have only themselves to blame. They may indeed argue that the decision of the

law is not founded on sufficient evidence, and that the results of it are calamitous and deplorable, but they cannot allege that the law has encroached on their spiritual independence. This way of looking at the matter makes clear to me the whole course of the ten years' conflict between Church and State in Scotland, which ended in the Disruption of 1843. The State insisted on the Church keeping its bargain between them as interpreted by the existing laws, and, in so acting, it did no more than its duty. Of the two parties in the Church itself, one said, if these really be the terms of the bargain we can no longer abide by them, and shall rather relinquish all the benefits of the alliance; the other said, we dislike the terms as now explained to us, but we accept them in the meantime, and, remaining in the Church, we hope to be able in good time to convince the State that it is for its own interest to agree to some amendment of these terms. To this the State has so far acceded as to abolish patronage in 1874. It may indeed be questioned whether the State would have made this concession but for the memory of

its own apathy or obstinacy, which caused in 1843 the heroic exodus of five hundred devoted ministers, and about one half of the laity which formed the Free Church. Now again the State, by Clause 5 in the recent act of parliament (Churches of Scotland Act 1905), has given its consent that the Church of Scotland may alter its formula of subscription. If that has been given to a bare majority of the votes of the legislative courts, I think it a mistake, and that the Church of Scotland should voluntarily submit to some limitation or qualification of its acquired power. Radical changes should only be made by specified large majorities. We have a fitting precedent in the constitution of the United States of America. It provides that "Congress may itself by a two-thirds vote of each House (Senate and Representatives) prepare and propose amendments which, before they become law, must be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the component States."

The General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland has in May, 1906, re-asserted its spiritual independence, defining that independence as including the right to

change or modify its constitution, laws, and formulas, and that it holds its funds and property, present and future, in conformity with these principles as stated. I think that it is still open to question whether even this formal assertion and definition of independence will ensure that security in the Church's possession of its property which, it is generally assumed, would be ensured in the event of the Church passing further declaratory acts involving serious and fundamental changes. At the same time, it must be said that if the Church from conscientious convictions did so alter the present creed, it would be bound to obey these convictions even at the sacrifice of its property. The probability or rather possibility of such a course of action has, however, now become so remote that it need not be taken into account. The practical point which does need consideration is whether the Church should or should not now exercise the right it has asserted to change the present creed.

The necessity for a restatement of the Church's doctrine, in other words, of formulating a new creed, may be urged on the

following grounds. With the knowledge we now possess it seems to me that simple truthful acceptance of the Westminster Confession as it stands by itself is hardly possible. Further, I think that there is at least room for doubt whether the Declaratory Acts of the United Free Church, which qualify subscription, cover adequately every one of the objectionable dogmas of the Confession and give the liberty to traverse its strong statements, such as that of "the entire perfection" of the Scriptures, and the like, which these Declaratory Acts are supposed and claimed to give. But even if there were no doubt as to this, to the minds of many men it can never look but evasive and equivocating that, at his ordination, a minister or elder is "required to sincerely own and believe the doctrine of this Church as set forth in the Confession of Faith," while, at the same time, he is told by Declaratory Acts that he need not believe very important parts of that doctrine according to the plain meaning of the words of the Confession, but in some other different meaning of these words. Again, the short supplementary Declaratory Act of 1894 affirms that the previous

Declaratory Acts of 1879 and 1892 are not imposed upon subscribers to the Confession of Faith. This, if I rightly understand it, would mean that one subscriber may accept the Confession *minus* the Declaratory Acts, and another subscriber the Confession *plus* these Acts. I may not be a competent judge, but as far as I can see, the Confession of Faith with and without the Declaratory Acts are two not only different, but essentially different, theologies. The practical consequence of this alternative subscription might be that one clergyman may preach the insalvability of pagan and heathen peoples, or that the world was made in six literal days, and that another clergyman of the same Church may preach the very opposite. A new creed wisely framed, and comprehensive by its brevity and simplicity, would deliver us from all this uncertainty and confusion. It would relieve the consciences of men of sensitive honesty who are at present constrained to give their adhesion to doctrines they may know to be contrary to historic and scientific fact, and to be not true as a correct and adequate expression of their

theological beliefs. Why should they be called on to bind themselves to creeds drawn up by men of an age out of sympathy with modern thought—by men who had not wholly escaped the influence of the passions of recent conflicts, and whose knowledge of the universe and of the nature and origin of the Scriptures was greatly less than ours? When we read the Preamble to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and compare it with the sophistries of Newman's Tract 90, and with the excuses for subscription to these Articles, such as those which are used in the January number of the *Hibbert Journal* (1906); when we have some knowledge of the extent of disbelief in many of the dogmas of the Westminster Confession by the clergy and elders in Scotland, and some knowledge of the arguments advanced to overcome the scruples of reluctant subscribers, we are tempted to ask if the standard of honour in the Churches of both countries is not lower than in most societies which are purely secular. While movement by declaratory acts is to be deprecated it is right to acknowledge that under all the circumstances no other was perhaps possible, and that

they are proving to be most valuable stepping-stones to a higher level. I can see also the great difficulty which lies in the way of any sudden suppression of the Confession of Faith. But admitting all this, I think that we would be making a mistake in holding on too long to this document as an integral and necessary part of the Churches' charter. No doubt the Confession is venerable by age and by many sacred associations. No doubt, also, there is found in it much dignity of expression and even a certain grandeur in its ascriptions of infinite greatness and majesty to God, but, imperfect by its omissions, by its want of balance and proportion, and by its actual misstatements of truth as now perceived, I regard it, as a science of religion or theology, to be, as obsolete as the Ptolemaic astronomy. It is mechanical, harsh, remorseless. It is not a faithful report of our Heavenly Father. It is not a right presentment of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Because of this it has become so repulsive and hateful to me that, if I may be allowed, I would adjure my fellow laymen of all the Presbyterian Churches to demand its abrogation. As some justifica-

tion for this warmth of language, I add as an appendix a speech of the Rev. Dr. Story, the Principal of Glasgow University, as reported in the *Glasgow Herald* of the 28th May, 1903. Coming from such a source could any indictment of the Westminster Confession be stronger?

In advocating the making of a new creed I am not suggesting anything unprecedented. The eight Free Churches of England have, a few years ago, agreed upon a common catechism which is virtually a statement of their evangelical faith. The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America has very largely altered the Westminster Confession itself, striking out clauses from some chapters, adding two whole new chapters, and altering others. Besides this, it drew up in 1904 "A Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith for the better understanding of our Doctrinal Beliefs."

The power to make changes is not only a natural right but the necessary element of vitality in Churches as in other institutions. There is, therefore, something wrong in immobility, and something wrong in the

persistent retention of outworn symbols of religious belief. The Papacy, by affirming infallibility, has pronounced its own doom, for every healthy organism must have power to expel evil matter and to absorb the good. The Church of England, under the imperious rule of its Prayer Book, is now fretting over its impotence to remedy acknowledged grievances, to speak of no greater, such as the compulsion to read publicly the Athanasian creed. The Churches of Scotland are moored to the anchor of the Westminster Confession. But surely the time has come when we must examine anew the principles on which our conception of the Church is founded, and also the rules and procedure which are built on that conception. For never more than now the Churches are on their trial. They are asked to explain why it is that they have lost hold of the masses of the people. If we listen to voices outside the Church which have had so remarkable expression in the recently published book *Christianity and the Working Classes*, we find a unanimous denial by its twelve authors, some of them Labour members of Parliament, that the poor

are irreligious, however much they have become alienated from the Church. We are told that they reverence Christ, but not His religion as exemplified in the lives of those who profess to be His followers;—"that it is *Church*ianity not *Christ*ianity which they detest." The antagonism, which is asserted to be very real, is attributed to "religious exclusiveness," "religious snobbery," "want of sympathy with the new aspirations and ideals of the working man." Christ, they believe, taught the brotherhood of man. This gospel of generosity and self-sacrifice they feel is little preached, but ignored, and too often traversed by the practice of the ordinary church-goer. If we listen to a voice from within the Church, here is what Canon Henson has written: "He must be blind and deaf who does not see on all hands evident and sinister tokens of the dislike and disgust with which religious men regard the Churches." And again: "Men are weary of theology; they are contemptuous of systems of discipline and worship; a hundred tokens show that they are deserting the Churches, but they never fail to

welcome and yield to the influence of Christian goodness."

These grave charges are not without foundation. Many years ago my friend the late Professor Alexander Balmain Bruce, the eminent theologian and author, said to me with reference to certain discussions in the General Assembly of the Free Church, "How beautiful Christianity can be in individual lives, but how unlovely it sometimes is incorporated." However great be the deficiencies of the Churches, however true it may be that the debates and controversies within the Church do not afford the highest examples of courtesy, candour, and charity, I hold that it is not the clergy but we the lay members of the Churches who are chiefly to blame for the alienation of the working classes. We have been too long acting as if Christianity was little more than an affair of a few religious services performed in a comfortable pew, with the accessories of pleasant music and the mild excitement of listening to an essay well read or declaimed. To worship God is doubtless our duty, but that worship may be worse than useless if it

be belied by a week-day character wanting in honour, truthfulness, kindliness; in justice, mercy, and love to our neighbour, even the humblest. It is only too true, as we are now being told so plainly, that the church-goer who is a tyrannic master, an unscrupulous trader, or a selfish lover of pleasure, drives his fellow-men away from the Church and from all the healing influences which should be found within the Church.

FOURTEENTH ARTICLE

THE Fourteenth Article, which might well be excluded from a creed, is a statement of the Presbyterian theory of the government of the Church as distinguished from that of the Roman, Greek, and Anglican Churches. These Churches hold that the office of Bishop is superior to that of Presbyter—that it is apostolic in dignity, continuous in unbroken succession, and that it is essential to the validity of ordination. This claim I believe is founded upon the alleged fact that the three orders of Priest, Deacon, and Bishop are Divine institutions, for the reason that they were recognised and sanctioned by the Apostles. But if apostolic approval constitutes the Divine element of an institution, would not also election by lot to apostolic office

itself and the principle of community of goods, be Divine? for they also had apostolic approval. The truth seems to be that the leaders of the early Church followed the precedents of the Jewish synagogue, which were familiar to their experience. Their example of doing that which was expedient in the circumstances is all we need to follow. The appointment of a Bishop requires no other justification than expediency, but neither expediency nor Christian humility will justify the seating him on a cathedral throne. All such pomp of office appertains to the antiquated conception of a visible Kingdom of Christ on earth.

In full consistency with these very low Church views has been the opinion I ventured to urge that a great opportunity has now come for making revolutionary changes in the constitution of our Presbyterian religious societies; —Churches, no doubt, they must in courtesy continue to be called. A new creed seems to me to be a necessity, if, for no other reason, than to remove the scandal—to my mind the very great scandal—of dishonest subscription. As to changes in Church government, I wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* on the 30th of August;

1904, as follows:—"In the three short letters I sent you dated the 3rd, 6th, and 10th of this month I carefully abstained from expressing any opinion as to the recent decision of the House of Lords and all that it involves. My sole motive in writing was to urge the laymen of the U.F. Church to draw good out of the evil and make 'sweet the uses of adversity.' In a conjuncture so acute, in circumstances so momentous, our voices may be heard when we demand that the Church shall provide us with a new short creed, and that our representation in the legislative Courts must be amended.

"To this latter suggestion may I now be allowed to add that much more ought to be done than only to alter the method of electing our delegates. The Church Courts themselves require radical change. The General Assembly should be divided into two houses, as in the British Parliament—one for clergymen alone, and one for laymen alone. No enactment of the one house would be valid without the assent of the other; and, in certain extreme cases of deadlock or otherwise, the matter under consideration would

be submitted to the whole membership by some scheme of referendum. The house of laymen would naturally give its chief concern to questions of finance and property; the other house to those of doctrine, worship, and evangelising.

"I venture to say that the material well-being of the clergy would be promoted by such a change, for the reason that laymen would feel more than they do at present their responsibility to provide suitably for the maintenance of those who devote their whole lives to the ministry. It would relieve the clergymen themselves of the odium of seeming to speak with a selfish bias when they intervene in financial debate. I venture to say also, that, if there had been a constitution such as this, twenty years ago, the catastrophe we now so greatly deplore would have been averted.

"Our old Scottish Parliament or Estates was virtually one house in which Lords and Commons sat together. It seems to me to be probable that Knox and the Reformers, in framing the constitution of the Church, followed the precedent of the secular Government of the time. But all experience and

all political philosophy points to the necessity of two Houses of Parliament. I know of no reason why this is not equally expedient in the ecclesiastical region."

A LAYMAN'S THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRY.

"There be two things, unity and uniformity."

"Men create oppositions which are not, and put them into new terms so fixed, as whereas the meaning ought to govern the term, the term in effect governs the meaning."

"And if it so come to pass in that distance of judgment which is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, that knows the heart, doth not discern that frail men, in some of their contradictions, intend the same thing, and accepteth of both?"

BACON.

COVE, 13*th December*, 1897.

DEAR SOUTHWELL,

Finding myself with some leisure to-day when I am taking a holiday from business, I shall tell you a little of my thoughts after reading parts only, and that in a superficial way, of the book you kindly lent me.

It happens that I have also been reading anew the earlier volumes of Froude's *History*, and can compare his and Mr. Wakeman's presentation of the same events. The motive of the latter seems to be to minimise the corruptions of the Church of Rome, and to weaken the reasons for the protests and for the violent action of the reformers; the motive of the other to show the reality of these corruptions, and to justify a revolution which was nothing short of salvation from spiritual domination. I know very well that while

Froude is credited with a literary style of sparkling clearness, and with a dramatic power of marshalling facts, his accuracy is often open to question. Of this students alone are able to judge, but I still can form opinions from the authentic documents which he so largely quotes. Mr. Wakeman, on his part, seems to me to be rather slipshod in his statements and extreme in his partisanship. For example, at page 247 he says: "It is said that altogether during the reign of Henry VIII. no less than 70,000 persons were put to death for offences against the law." Froude, at page 411 of his third volume, examines the "respectable authorities," and by simply naming them and repeating their statements, proves their utter untrustworthiness. At page 241 of Mr. Wakeman's book, the execution of Anne Boleyne is spoken of as "a murder of deeper dye than any other gross and foul act of tyranny of which the history of England makes mention." But no one, in my view, can read the full account of the trial—of the names of the judges (some of whom were the queen's relatives); of the confessions of the implicated adulterers (who could gain nothing by confes-

sion)—without feeling the evidence for guilt to be enormous. The punishment was extreme, but there seems to have been a callousness as to bloodshed in those days which is beyond our comprehension.

I suppose that the general purpose of Mr. Wakeman's book is to prove the historical continuity and identity of the Anglican Church with the Churches of Christendom, let us say, in the fifth century, before the claims to primacy of the Church of Rome had been admitted, and when the "apostolic" system had been generally adopted. I have no desire to dispute any such contention. The question has no interest for me other than academic. The only century I care about is the first; or, in other words, I attach no authoritative value to any records or precedents other than those of the New Testament. My appeal is to the sayings of Christ, and to what we are told in the Acts and the Epistles of the original constitution of the Church. Christ has said, "Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden," "Him that cometh unto me I will in no way cast out," "Call no man master," "Where two or three are met together

in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Words such as these are the charter of my freedom. No priest, no bishop, no Presbyterian minister must intervene. In the light of such language no external acts, no sacraments, can be regarded as indispensable for salvation, but only as the wisely appointed means of helping our faith and promoting our sanctification. As to the visible Church, does not Christ Himself warn us to beware of false prophets? Do not His apostles counsel us to "try the spirits"; to "prove all things," and do they not predict early departures from sound doctrine and practice? In accordance with such injunctions—thinking and judging for myself—I repudiate the system I understand by the term "apostolic" and the theories I understand by the term "sacramentarian." Do not let us forget this, that from all bodies of men who assert for themselves special powers and privileges we have the right to ask their credentials; and, further, that in whatever laws and rules such men make for others we have always strong reason to suspect self-interest. I apply this to the early Church. The gradual absorption of its government by the clergy appears

to me to be largely a usurpation, and it is only to be expected that men in such circumstances should create offices and titles, and introduce new doctrines, observances, and ceremonies to magnify their own importance and enhance their own wealth and power.

You know my view that a bishop in the modern sense is not the bishop of St. Paul's time, and how I believe this to be abundantly evident from the story of his sending from Miletus to Ephesus, "calling to him the presbyters." These men he addresses, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost has made you bishops to feed the church of God." These bishops, then, who presided over a comparatively small Christian community, were fairly large in number, and, doubtless, were no other than ordinary citizens selected from among their fellow converts on account of superior character and gifts. This to me is an illustration how words rule our thoughts. The word remains, the thing itself has changed. If there be any reality in the theory of "apostolic succession," it obtains with greater force in the Scottish Churches (unfortunately, in my opinion, called

Presbyterian) than in the Anglican Church, for they have given a wider space to the office and work of the bishop—in its real and primitive sense—and the ordination of them continuously has never been interrupted.

In contending, as I virtually am doing, for a grander and nobler conception of the Church than appears to be in Mr. Wakeman's thoughts, I have appealed to the words of Christ, but I appeal also to fact and to personal experience. Has not God (and I desire to express myself with deep reverence) baptised with His Holy Spirit men who are outside the so-called Apostolic Churches? Have I not known men and women of the saintliest lives who manifestly were members of Christ's mystical body although members of Churches whose sacraments are not allowed to be valid; and do I not know by the intuitions of my own soul that no human agent and no rite is necessary to absolution from sin and to the sense of its forgiveness?

I speak, my dear Southwell, with some warmth, for I detest all priestly pretensions—the "lording it over Christ's heritage." I regard with profound regret and with some

scorn the exclusive, and, to my way of thinking, the schismatic spirit of the extreme Anglican party, and I view with distress the yearning of so many of its members towards the Roman Church and towards some of its false and degrading practices. Surely all this is inconsistent with the manhood of Englishmen, and with the adjuration that we "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free."—Believe me, with kindest regards, yours always, affectionately,

J. S. TEMPLETON.

T. MARTIN SOUTHWELL, ESQ.,
Carpet Manufacturer,
Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

R.M.S. "CHINA" AT SEA,
6th January, 1898.

MY DEAR SOUTHWELL,

. . . . . .

Let me say, in the first place, that I am glad that you give me credit for some breadth of view, because I really feared that I was not making sufficient allowance for the mental habit and attitude of others. The whole question of what is the Church, and what are its functions, is confessedly most difficult. So much has been written and spoken that it seems almost presumptuous for laymen to express any opinion at all. Nevertheless we cannot divest ourselves of responsibility, and therefore it is not altogether arrogance to differ from reputed authority.

Here, then, are some of the questions I ask myself: "What meaning are we to attach

to Christ saying that His Kingdom was not of this world—that the Kingdom cometh not with observation, but is within you?" And of St. Paul's defining the Kingdom of God being "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?" Would not sayings such as these mean that this Kingdom—this Church—is subjective, not objective? Again I ask, is unity of belief, except in a few essential doctrines, a possible thing? Men must always differ, and it is even strange that we are only now beginning to see that opinion cannot be compelled. The Preamble to the Thirty-nine Articles of your Prayer Book is a curious illustration that, three and a half centuries ago, it was assumed that opinion could be compelled. Should considerations such as these not lead us to doubt whether we may not be pursuing a phantom, when we expect that all Christians—all those I mean who love and seek to obey Christ in sincerity and truth—must necessarily be parts of one complete concrete organism? May not the true unity which we are required to promote be something different from this? May not that unity, so far as it has visible expression, be

a unity analogous to that of an army of which the component parts, while differing in their kinds of service, and while even mutually jealous, are agreed in devotion to one leader and in the desire to succeed in one general purpose? But even such a theory of unity points to the mental motives—(the subjective)—being the essential element: to the outward organisation—(the objective)—the accidental. I am inclined to think that such a view of unity is the only real, the only possible Catholicity. As a practical principle of my own life it has been growing much of late years. Accepting the fact of necessary external divisions, attaching little importance to the dogmas—in almost no case essential to salvation—which are the grounds of difference among Christian denominations, I could become a member of any, and to all feel sympathy and the willingness to help with my means.

Following up the line of thought which makes religion mainly subjective, let me tell you of my surprise in reading the life of Cardinal Manning—how, paying a visit to Cologne Cathedral, he writes enthusiastically

of the advantages of Roman Catholic worship over that of the Anglican Church of which he was still a member, from its being so much more "objective." He was referring to the adoration of relics and the like. But surely, if the second commandment of the Decalogue means anything, it is the primitive assertion that religion is subjective. And so in the New Testament. How remarkable and how significant is the silence of our Lord and His Apostles as to the performance of any external acts. The little that is said rather suggests their nullity. "When ye pray enter into your closet." When a model prayer is taught, it is brief almost to baldness. He institutes indeed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but the very simplicity of the rite seems to sustain my contention. All St. Paul's epistles appear to my general impressions to be saturated with the idea that the believer in Christ is raised above all ordinances, all observances. No days, no places, no persons have for him any special sanctity. So with the other Apostles. St. James identifies true religion with the common charities of life, and St. John insists upon

love to God and man being its sum and substance.

To return for a moment to the subject of unity, was not Christ showing us an example of toleration when, on hearing complaints that other men, not His followers, were casting out devils in His name, He said, "Forbid them not." Surely these others were, in some sense, another Church not then incorporated with His own.

The position I have been trying to reach, if I have reached it, would prepare the way for my making reference to your remark as to "the awful unreality of much of our public worship." But are we not burdening that worship with a necessity to be very real? If Christ tells us to pray to our Father in secret, then does it not follow that public worship must largely be less real? And, in fact, that is how I have come to regard that and all social worship. It has become to me very much an official act; one in which I take part freely and gladly as done in my capacity as a member of a community and a member of a family. To multiply and elaborate Church services, or to think of

them but as different and subsidiary to private devotion must therefore, if I am right, have in it an element of serious danger. In respect to them I could exclaim with St. Paul, "Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit are ye now to be perfected in the flesh?"

. . . . . .

Believe me, always, yours most sincerely,

J. S. TEMPLETON.

COVE, DUMBARTONSHIRE;
1st January, 1899.

MY DEAR SOUTHWELL,

In writing you a few days ago I said that I would postpone all reference to the Duke of Argyll's letter which you kindly sent me. If I attempt to refer to it now, I fear that I cannot express myself within the bounds of ordinary correspondence. However, it will do me good to define to myself the opinions I hold, and it may at least interest you to watch the process, even although it may not carry with it your assent.

I have always understood that the statements on the subject of the Eucharist in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England were in substantial agreement. The term

you use, "Consubstantiation," would, I think, be refused by the Duke as being indefinite and unphilosophical. With every word he says as to turning a simple ordinance intended to be a common bond of union into the battlefield of sectarian strife, I agree with all my heart.

A short time since I had occasion to state my own views of the Lord's Supper, and I did so in language I shall now try to repeat. "Why can't we see," I said, "that Christ used metaphors as a poet would, and such as were intelligible and in accord with the mental habits of an Oriental people? He has said 'I am the Vine,' 'I am the Door.' On one occasion (Matthew xvi., vv. 5 to 12) He upbraids His disciples for their slowness to see that He was speaking figuratively. 'How is it,' He says, 'that ye do not perceive that I speak not to you concerning bread' (literal bread). Surely, therefore, we may regard Christ's words at the institution of the commemorative rite as intended to convey a spiritual conception. To attach a literal meaning to them is a pure misapprehension of the contemporary modes of speech

no less than gross materialism." I went on to say, "Have you ever paused to think what a marvellous thing growth is? Man can construct. To work in any way corresponding to growth in vegetable or animal life is utterly beyond his power. Growth is Divine—the visible expression of the immanent Creator. The thought involved in Christ's language evidently is this, that inasmuch as the life and the growth of our material bodies are nourished by bread and wine, so does that of our souls depend upon Him. The Kingdom of God is as seed which springs up and grows, 'he knoweth not how' (Mark iv. 26). On our part we announce our faith by an act of loving remembrance; He, on His part, promises that our souls shall be sustained and grow in grace just as our bodies are sustained and grow by the use of food. The bread and wine are the outward signs of a real transaction. To suggest anything mysterious in the outward signs—something changed or superadded—can in no degree enhance the solemnity of the spiritual fact."

But many questions surround Eucharistic

doctrine beyond the meaning of the rite. To whom is it to be administered, and by whom? What makes it valid and what invalid? Questions such as these carry you inevitably back to the fundamental consideration, What is the Church, has it divinely appointed laws, and has it divinely accredited ministers?

The Duke of Argyll in a letter to the *Times*, written previously to that you sent me, avows himself to be a High Churchman, by which he says he means that he holds the highest possible estimate of the origin, of the nature, and of the rights of the Church of Christ as a visible society on earth. The statements of the authoritative documents of the Presbyterian Church clearly sustain this view, and, in the assertion of its independent jurisdiction, even go beyond those of the Church of England. If, therefore, I express doubts as to the generally accepted dogmas on the subject, I am daring to differ from my own Church as much as from yours.

But I say, why should we be bound by the creeds of two and a half centuries ago?

Is there not a strong presumption that the Reformers were incapable of freeing themselves altogether from influences inherited from the Church of Rome? As a matter of fact, we plainly see that they did err. Many of the articles of our Confession, such, for instance, as the duty of the civil magistrate to enforce ecclesiastical penalties, are now repudiated. Why should I accept as authoritative the opinions of men who, some three years after the promulgation of the Confession (about 1648), passed an edict in the English Parliament that "any man who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the divinity of Christ," etc., "shall suffer the pain of death?" Therefore, it seems to me no presumption to think it possible that the theories of that age as to the visible Church may be misconceptions, and, in their effect, mischievous.

A visible Church there must be, as there has always been, but it is equally true that there is a Church invisible, for "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"; a category which includes some of those who are outside the visible Church as certainly

as the visible Church includes some of those who are not led by the Spirit of God. What I ask myself then is this: Have not men, ever since Apostolic times, been thinking too much of the Church in the sense of a concrete organisation, and too little of it in the higher sense of the unseen and incalculable number of true believers? Should the outward things which give the visible Church its form and pressure not be regarded as accidental rather than as essential, not as primary but as secondary, not as permanent but as variable and transitory? If we turn to the Gospels we find that Christ Himself distinctly affirms that "His Kingdom is not of this world" . . . "that it comes not with observation (or outward show) but is within us." He tells His disciples that authority "among them shall not be such dominion or authority as the Gentiles exercise." He speaks of all "those who hear His voice as becoming one flock" (not one fold, as wrongly translated) "of which He is the one Shepherd," and of "those who do the will of God as being His mother and brethren." He intimates His purpose to build a Church of which St. Peter, because of his confession of the Messiahship

of His Master, should be the rock-stone. The confession clearly is the essential qualification —that only which makes every man a stone in the edifice which Christ then saw with joyous anticipation was begun to be laid in that first discovery and acknowledgment of His Messiahship. As this qualification is spiritual and unseen there can be no inference that He had in His thought or intended to suggest a superstructure which would be impressive by its external manifestation. It may be contended that the appointment by Christ of His twelve disciples indicates a rudimentary plan for the government of the visible Church. That certainly is not what we are told was the purpose of the appointment. The purpose is distinctly said to be that they should be trained by Christ Himself in the knowledge of the principles of His kingdom, that they should be Apostles or envoys in the dissemination of these principles, and finally, that they should be witnesses to the facts of His life, death, and resurrection. I know of no words attributed to Christ which can be received as evidence to prove that He gave any commission to the Apostles to appoint successors; I fail to find

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it in the often-quoted passages where the disciples are charged "to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation," and in that in which He is said to have "breathed upon them saying, whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained." These seem to me not to imply any instruction to perpetuate the office of Apostle, but only to express the obligation of all believers to spread the Gospel, and the promise to sustain the judgment of Christian societies in the exercise of just and salutary discipline.

When, in the "Acts of the Apostles" and the Epistles, we come to examine the development of rule and subordination in the primitive Church, the prevailing note seems to be simplicity of administration. The general body of disciples, or, as we would say, the laity, are constantly recognised. They are the "saints," "the faithful brethren," "elect," "living stones built up a living house," "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices." The seven deacons were chosen by "the whole multitude." The election of Matthias was by "the brethren." As to officers over this "multitude

of disciples," St. Paul once, and only once, in all his epistles to the various churches, includes with "the saints at Philippi" "the bishops and deacons." These seem to be the only officers intrusted with permanent rule—the former, the presbyters, that is, elders, being alternatively called bishops, that is overseers. If we can divest our minds of the associations of language it becomes evident that there was no such thing in the New Testament Church as bishops in its present diocesan or president sense, and that the Apostles, as again the name implies, were so called as being heralds or envoys—St. Paul himself to all the Gentile churches, Titus to Crete, and as our own missionaries of to-day are to the heathen.

St. Paul, indeed, speaks of "God having set in the Church apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles," etc., and the enumeration is given in connection with the exhortation to the converts "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He founds his arguments on the analogy of the unity of the human body through the mutual and necessary subserviency of all its separate parts, on that of the close relationship of husband and wife, and on that

of the consolidation of a temple built with individual stones. The unity St. Paul desiderates is clearly a spiritual unity, not that of external incorporation. When his arguments are looked at broadly, it is, I think, apparent that the enumeration (and the enumeration is varied in the repetition) is used to illustrate the variety of service needful in all Christian societies, rather than to specify formal offices in them. Further, it is not to be forgotten that if the one body spoken of be the visible Church, Christ cannot be the Head of a body in that sense of the term, for some of its members are corrupt. Similarly, He cannot be "the husband to whom the Church as a chaste virgin is espoused"; and again the visible Church, strictly as such, cannot be the "Holy Temple in the Lord in whom true believers are builded together for the habitation of God in the Spirit."

The sum of all my impressions of the teaching of Scripture, and particularly from the words of our Saviour Himself, is that His Kingdom is ethical, universal, independent of time, place, or polity. So far as the Kingdom has officers, their eminence is derived from

spiritual qualities. Christ Himself is always felt to be a man, and never the ecclesiastic. Of sacerdotal function we hear no claim, and the whole spirit of it is repudiated by St. Paul as appertaining to the ordinances of Judaism which are for ever abrogated. How clearly this is announced is shown in his assertion, iterated three times with curious variation, "Circumcision and uncircumcision availeth nothing, but the keeping of the commandments": "circumcision and uncircumcision availeth nothing, but a new creature"; "circumcision and uncircumcision availeth nothing, but faith which worketh by love." Surely it is a more noble, a more transcendental, a more original, and therefore a more Divine conception to regard the domain of Christ's reign to be the hearts and consciences of individual men, rather than in a Church conspicuous among human institutions by reason of the completeness of its organisation, the splendour of its rites, and the dignity and power of its officials. Such a conception seems at least more consistent with the character of Him who, meek and lowly in heart, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

When, under the guidance of such thoughts I return to the consideration of what constitutes the validity of the observance of the Lord's Supper, I take a view which you will think extreme and even violent. This may appear the more surprising when I say that I do so after reading Bishop Lightfoot's *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*, Dr. Fenton Hort's *Christian Ecclesia*, and Canon Gore on *The Church and the Ministry*. My view then is, that nothing is needed to give validity to the sacrament but the common action of true believers. We are not told that the presence of any office-bearer is necessary, and I do not see that, in the nature of things, it should be necessary. Undoubtedly it is incumbent upon all Christians to "do all things in decency and order." For that reason it is most expedient that some one should preside as Christ Himself presided, and that this president be one of the overseers, pastors, or teachers of the local Church. But his presence is not a necessity, and his right to preside is, from my point of view, in no way dependent on ordination to office by a bishop in the modern or diocesan sense of the word. The desirability and

advantage of some ordination I admit, but an ordination derived from, as its ultimate source, the consent of the Ecclesia—the assembly or congregation of Christian people. To me the truth seems to be that Church government is very largely a matter of expediency. We are Christ's freemen, and as such, I believe that we are very much left to rule our religious societies according to time, place, and circumstance.

Of the three standard books of which I have made mention, let me say a very few words. Bishop Lightfoot is able to prove indisputably that very early the Episcopate became the ruling function in the Church. He labours to prove, but, in my opinion, he labours ineffectually to prove, that the change involved was prevalent in Asia Minor in the days of St. John, and received his sanction. On this presumption, and it is no more than a presumption, he founds the claim that the diocesan or president bishop, no less than the presbyter bishop and the deacon, is a Divine institution. Canon Gore's treatise I dismiss with the remark that his hypothesis is subverted by a *reductio ad absurdum*,—that it

contradicts the facts and experience of Christian life. Dr. Hort's views appeal more to my reasonable assent, and are expressed with an evidently sincere desire to reach the truth and a scrupulous avoidance of rhetorical treatment which I cannot but greatly admire.

One effect of the opinions I have been endeavouring to express has been to make me think and feel tolerantly towards all those who call themselves Christians. On one occasion during my travels abroad I was for more than a week the companion of a Spanish Roman Catholic gentleman, who impressed me as being truly earnest and sincere. He spoke to me of the unwisdom of urging children to partake of the communion until they could do so with the spontaneity of conviction, and how he sought to be the confessor for the members of his family, an old and devout priest. In like circumstances I had long talks with an Irish Roman Catholic bishop. Evidently he regarded me with charitable comprehension, for he said that, as my baptism, though administered by a layman (as he held a Presbyterian clergyman to be), was valid in my case and under the conditions of my

invincible ignorance, I really was, although I did not know it, a member of the Catholic Church.

Thus also I have never felt objections to Episcopacy so far as its methods are wise and good, as, to a large extent, I believe them to be. But you need no assurance from me that this letter is not written in an unfriendly spirit to the Church of England. Rather my earnest wish and prayer is that she will be preserved, especially in this crisis of her history, from all error and superstition, and that, as she has been great and illustrious in the past, she may be still greater in the future by fruitful service to her Heavenly Master.—Believe me, dear Southwell, Always yours very truly,

J. S. TEMPLETON.

KNOCKDERRY CASTLE,
COVE, *25th March*, 1899.

MY DEAR SOUTHWELL,

In acknowledging briefly your gift to me of the book *Why we are Churchmen* I said that, after having read the first eighty pages, I thought it admirable, and that, if I wrote to you further, it would be in no controversial spirit and only with the desire to reach closer to the mind of Christ.

The complete perusal of the book not only confirms but enhances my first impressions. Your friend, Prebendary Oldham, writes clearly, simply, and temperately—with great condensation of thought and sense of proportion. He says so much that commands hearty approval, and presents so attractive a vision of an ideal church—stately and orderly, venerable by age and associations,—as to excite the wish

that, all our ecclesiastical differences being healed, we might within its borders find shelter, rest, and peace.

But while I feel much genuine sympathy with many of the views, and with the spirit in which they are expressed, I fear that transcendental claims, such as I understand the High Church party to hold, will always present obstacles to conciliation and comprehension.

These underlying principles may be regarded from many points of view. This is one. It is fair and logical to follow the methods of scientific research. According to these methods truth is sought by the examination of facts, and the rejection of every hypothesis which cannot be adjusted to them. In the sphere of religion, no less than in that of external nature, we are confronted with phenomena which demand explanation and reference to some law. For my present purpose it is enough that I mention two kinds. Every Christian society, by whatever name it be called, affords evidence of the influence of the Spirit of God. Even denominations so extreme and irregular as the Salvation Army and the Quakers—all, in fact, who proclaim

Christ and Him crucified—are seen to be channels of grace by which men are converted from sin to holiness. Not only has no Church a monopoly of Divine grace, but no single Church can be said to have it in any very marked degree or with any unvarying constancy more than another. Further, this may be said of individual men. The missionaries to the heathen of one Church, however high be its pretensions, have no greater success than those of Churches who make no pretensions. But more than this, men who have no formal commission or ordination have proved themselves endowed as evangelists with power so singular as can only be attributable to Divine help and approval. Remarkable examples have occurred within the range of my personal knowledge. Of these I shall refer only to that of my friend Henry Drummond, of whom, says his biographer, "it may be affirmed with all sobriety that his influence was like nothing so much as the influence of one of the greater mediæval saints."

Another kind of fact is the real disunion within Churches visibly united; a disunion not always in matters trivial and unessential.

A recent writer in the *Contemporary* speaks of "the great difference which makes an absolute division between the two parties in the Church of England," and even in the Church of Rome, underneath a nominal acceptance of infallible authority, there are said to be divergencies of opinion which might be regarded as vital. Divergencies, indeed, such as violate the high ideal of unity commended to us in the Gospels, exist in all the Churches. As to the three great so-called Apostolic Churches, whatever may be said (and Prebendary Oldham has said it better than Mr. Wakeman) as to the continuity of the Anglican Church, the fact remains that it is a separate entity relatively to the Greek and Roman Churches, and disunited from them in respect to matters of dogma and government which are irreconcilable and insuperable.

Let me say briefly that it does not seem to me possible that extreme High Church theory can coincide with these phenomena. And if they do not, does it not follow that any Church or Churches which, on the ground of untenable theory, believe themselves to be the favourites of Heaven and the possessors of exclusive

privileges, transgress the law of charity, and suffer by provoking alienation or revolt? Have not Churches yet to learn the universality of Divine benignance as St. Peter did in the case of Cornelius, when the force of a revelation led him to exclaim: "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptised which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

There is still another point of view from which to regard High Church principles. It is surely a reasonable proposition to maintain that in the degree in which claims are made upon our reverence and submission, in that degree we are entitled to ask clearness and cogency of proof. The theory of Apostolic succession seems to me to fail from want of such proof. We have no "express statement" of it, says Bishop Lightfoot as quoted by Prebendary Oldham. "In Scripture," says the Prebendary himself, "are to be found allusions," etc. (page 122). Those to the commission to Timothy and Titus are the strongest, as affording a presumption that these two men were early ordained officers of a new and distinct order. But is this inference certain? It seems a

natural arrangement that special men should be sent to settle matters of doctrine and polity in the special circumstances of the new communities at Ephesus and Crete. Such a commission might be only temporary, as in the case of an English missionary settling the similar affairs of converts in China or India. The alternative contention, that the office of Timothy and Titus was permanent in respect to authority and superior to the Presbyter-bishop in respect to rank, is certainly very arguable. This, however, is my point: Is the proof of it commensurate to the claim to be a Divine institution, and to be a foundation on which to build so vast a superstructure as that of sacramentarianism and sacerdotalism?

Again, the commission given to every clergyman at his ordination to absolve from sin or to retain it is surely so awful a responsibility—perilous to the man himself and perilous to the people put under his charge—that it requires certification beyond dispute. But the interpretation of Scripture upon which it relies is disputed and is most disputable. Here again the conditions of my second proposition can hardly be said to be fulfilled.

Considerations such as these lead us to the question, to which Prebendary Oldham refers in his sixth chapter, as to the right or wrong of dissent. The unity in His Church for which Christ prayed is, as the Prebendary says, an absolute unity. So also, let me add, is the righteousness He demands absolute—"that we be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect." These are goals indeed towards which we must run, but are we not too impatient of the length of the course? I sometimes think that, when the slow progress of Christianity is scouted as the sign of failure, the slowness is only analogous to God's acts of creation. Science has taught us that geological changes and organic developments are immeasurably slow. Does it not therefore appear a correspondent truth that unity in religion can only be ultimately attained by a passage through long and arduous conflicts such as are even foretold by Christ Himself when He said that "He came not to bring peace, but a sword."

But slowness of advance does not lessen our obligation to hasten every movement towards unity, and will not that best be done by removing every impediment to mutual

approach? This obligation certainly condemns every unnecessary schism. Is schism and dissent, then, ever justifiable? I certainly think it is in many cases not only justifiable but praiseworthy. Take such instances as have arisen in Scotland, with which I am most conversant, and where, among Presbyterian Churches, there has always been substantial identity of doctrine. In the Established Church the legal rights of patrons had often been abused. Ministers who were notoriously careless and immoral were intruded upon country parishes. The people, finding no means of redress, sought for themselves pastors whom they believed to be faithful and earnest. Many little secessions of this kind led to the formation of separate dissenting Churches united on the common ground of resistance to tyranny. The great disruption in 1843, when nearly five hundred clergymen threw up their offices and emoluments, had its origin in similar trouble arising out of patronage, ultimately involving the larger question of spiritual independence. Were these men, then, schismatics? They indeed separated themselves from an organised body

called the Church of Scotland, but they did not separate themselves from Christ Himself. That Christ did not separate Himself from them is made indubitably evident in the fruits of their righteous and holy lives. Looking at these events dispassionately I can see elements of evil, but the general issue has been good. God can "make even the wrath of man to praise Him," and certainly the building and equipment of, I suppose, a thousand new churches was a deed which could only be achieved at a time when the convictions of men were strong and their feelings deeply stirred. It is curious that while there has been in Scotland centrifugal forces at work, there has always been others which are centripetal. A chart has been shown me, drawn as of a river, where one branch after another of the Churches flows into a main branch: half a dozen at least to form the United Presbyterian Church, one or two the Free Church, and now these two have agreed upon terms of union which will be speedily consummated. But the same tendency is observable among English nonconformists. Have you seen their

recently published common catechism, which proves an identity of doctrine as marvellous as it is unexpected? Agitation, antagonism, competition may be evils, but are they less so than apathy and stagnation? And is it not possible that the divisions we deprecate may secure freedom of criticism and protection against false assumptions of authority? As all Church members grow in personal devotion to Christ they will recognise its existence in each other, and the great reality of the Church invisible will assert itself against the barriers of visible organisations.

It is not a little remarkable that, when St. Paul is discussing with his converts at Corinth the administration of their Church, he abruptly turns, as from a subject distasteful or unworthy, to burst out in his magnificent eulogy of love, "and a still more excellent way show I unto you," he exclaims. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." In my own case, in which I suppose the intellectual to predominate over the spiritual, I do feel the need of being reminded that, "if

I had the gift of prophecy and knew all mysteries,"—had every dogma of faith fixed with scientific precision—"but had not love, I am nothing." Here, then, we have the supreme rule not only for our conduct, but for our thoughts of each other and of each other's creeds and Churches. Here also we have the warrant, "hoping all things, believing all things," to anticipate visible union even on earth.

In reviewing what I have now written, I see that I have been controversial in spite of myself. I seem to be giving reasons why I am not a Churchman. But I am a Churchman, and my assertion suggests how unwise may be the appropriation of a term common to all, and how the arrogation of it may retard the very unity we all desire.—Believe me, yours always, most sincerely,

J. S. TEMPLETON.

APPENDIX A.

SPEECH BY REV. PRINCIPAL STORY, D.D., ON THE "CONFESSION OF FAITH," 27TH MAY, 1903.*

PRINCIPAL STORY moved the following motion:

"In requiring subscription to the formula legalised by Act of the Scots Parliament, 1693, the General Assembly does now expressly declare that the Confession of Faith is to be regarded not as an infallible creed imposed on the consciences of men, but as a system of doctrine valid only in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture, interpreted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

He said this overture was again before them on the same subject, though it did not appear exactly in the same terms. But its reappearance in any shape was only a renewed indication of what must have struck anyone knowing the history of the Church,

* As reported in the *Glasgow Herald.*

the movements of opinion in the Church for some years indicating a steady and growing dissatisfaction with the formula, which required of every entrant to the ministry an unqualified adherence to the Confession of Faith. Why should it be felt a burden on the intelligence and conscience of those who were called to sign the Confession as the confession of their own faith, which the formula required. Looking into the document, there were things which seemed to justify this feeling. It gave a wholly unsatisfactory account of the creation of the world and of man—man as the highest type of creation, created for the glory of God. That, in the light of what the Confession afterwards said, was inconsistent and contradictory, for the Confession subsequently said that God derived no glory from man, that man was defiled in all parts and faculties of his nature, and was incapable of rendering any glory to God. The Confession also taught us the doctrine, not only of the supreme power, but of the absolute foreknowledge of God. The doctrine was incomprehensible and contradictory, and it filled the minds, especially

of the young, with false ideas of the divine motive in the creation. Looking through the Confession they came upon a theory of human nature, human corruption, which virtually exhibited the creation as a failure and represented any good that might be wrought out in man as not the result of any effort or desire on the part of man himself, but as mere mechanical results of superhuman power exercised upon them. The will of God was represented by the Confession of Faith as simply an arbitrary will, not actuated by moral ideas, but centring in itself, seeking its own ends—a will which held all men to lie under the sentence of death for their sins, resolved to save some from that sentence of death "to the praise," as the Confession put it, "to the praise of God's glorious grace," and then was represented as damning others "to the praise of His glorious justice"; though where the justice came in was hard to understand, seeing that the Confession had taught them that God, in the case of those who were condemned to everlasting torment, had withheld from them the means of grace. Was that in any sense

whatever a moral idea? The whole idea of the covenant theology was the theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth century; it was legal, not moral. The axis upon which the system revolved was election. The Fatherhood of God was ignored, the Fatherly love was never spoken of; it might not exist for all that was found in the theological system of the Confession of Faith. The idea of arbitrary election permeated it from beginning to end; even the perseverance of the saints depended on the immutable decree of God. Could there be a doctrine more fruitful of self-confidence, self-satisfaction, more relaxing to the noble moral attributes of man? Certainly not. Again, in the working out of the theory of the Atonement the idea was inadequate. In the main the idea was that of a satisfaction of Divine justice, not an exhibition of Divine love. It was not a revelation of love which lifted man up to the height of its own purity. It was a revelation of a legal system whereby the Divine justice was satisfied, letting some sinners escape, others being punished everlastingly for their sins. It was, further, not an atonement for all men; it was

a limited atonement in the strictest sense. The whole subject was saturated with Hebrew ideas with regard to other communions, was full of the deep intolerance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dealing next with the eschatology of the creed, he said the doctrine of the Confession was that the souls of the wicked were cast into hell and remained in torment and utter darkness reserved for the judgment of the great day. The end for which that tremendous Assize was appointed by God was said to have been for His own glory, for the glory of His mercy in the elect, for the glory of His justice in the reprobate. One would "rather be a Pagan suckled in a creed outworn" than bend his knees, prostrate himself, before such a monstrous travesty of Divinity and omnipotence. It was no mere sentimental motive that led them to bring this question before the Church, and to implore the Church to deliver its servants from the burden of unqualified adherence to the formula. They surely must feel that people thinking for themselves, looking abroad upon the currents of thought in the world, must feel that the

sacred barque of the Church, with all that it contained of Christianity and purity and love, could not continue to hold the ground of the seventeenth century. They must look with their eyes undimmed with the clouds and vapours the breath of God was seeking to sweep away. They should rid themselves of that which had too long been an incubus, which was an unworthy burden which they were seeking to place upon those who came after them.

APPENDIX B.

THE 39 Articles of the Church of England with the preamble and the forms of the ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are, or ought to be, well known to the members of that Church, because they are bound up together with the Psalms and the order of worship in all its Prayer Books. As the corresponding documents of the Presbyterian Church are not in this way so accessible, they are appended here for reference.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, AGREED UPON BY THE ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES AT WESTMINSTER: Examined and approved, *Anno* 1647, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and ratified by Acts of Parliament 1649 and 1690.

CHAP. I.—*Of the Holy Scripture.*

I. ALTHOUGH the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the

holy scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

II. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:—

[Here follows the list of the books of the authorised version of the Bible.]

All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

III. The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

IV. The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving under-

standing of such things as are revealed in the word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.

VII. All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, may have hope.

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, (which is not manifold, but one,) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

X. The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture.

CHAP. II.—*Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.*

I. THERE is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, not deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

CHAP. III.—*Of God's Eternal Decree.*

I. GOD from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is

God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

VII. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination

is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

CHAP. IV.—*Of Creation.*

I. IT pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

II. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

CHAP. V.—*Of Providence.*

I. GOD, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

II. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth

them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan: whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

VII. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

CHAP. VI.—*Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.*

I. OUR first parents being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

CHAP. VII.—*Of God's Covenant with Man.*

I. THE distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him

to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III. Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace: whereby he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel; under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foresignifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.

VI. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.

CHAP. VIII.—*Of Christ the Mediator.*

I. IT pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the

Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of his Church; the Heir of all things; and Judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

III. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell: to the end, that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

IV. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he may discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

V. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

VI. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof, were communicated unto the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever.

VII. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures; by each nature doing that which is proper to itself: yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

VIII. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them; and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

CHAP. IX.—*Of Free Will.*

I. GOD hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil.

II. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost

all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only.

CHAP. X.—*Of Effectual Calling.*

I. ALL those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.

IV. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common

operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

CHAP. XI.—*Of Justification.*

I. THOSE whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith: which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.

II. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

III. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, in as much as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

IV. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.

V. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified: and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

VI. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

CHAP. XII.—*Of Adoption.*

I. ALL those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

CHAP. XIII.—*Of Sanctification.*

I. THEY who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are farther sanctified really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part: whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for

a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

CHAP. XIV.—*Of Saving Faith.*

I. THE grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

III. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

CHAP. XV.—*Of Repentance unto Life.*

I. REPENTANCE unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

II. By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavouring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.

III. Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

IV. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

V. Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavour to repent of his particular sins particularly.

VI. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof; upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or publick confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.

CHAP. XVI.—*Of Good Works.*

I. GOOD works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto; that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life.

III. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure: yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound

to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

IV. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.

V. We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit or satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because, as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit; and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.

VI. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprovable in God's sight; but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

VII. Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.

CHAP. XVII.—*Of the Perseverance of the Saints.*

I. THEY whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither

totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

CHAP. XVIII.—*Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation.*

I. ALTHOUGH hypocrites, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed.

II. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our

inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

III. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

IV. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.

CHAP. XIX.—*Of the Law of God.*

I. GOD gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him, and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

II. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

III. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances; partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.

IV. To them also, as a body politick, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

V. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

VI. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the law requireth to be done.

CHAP. XX.—*Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.*

I. THE liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love, and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

II. God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

III. They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

IV. And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate.

CHAP. XXI.—*Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day.*

I. THE light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

II. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

III. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men; and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will,

with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.

IV. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

V. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preachings, and conscionable hearing of the word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.

VI. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is, now under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped every where in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so more solemnly in the publick assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God, by his word or providence, calleth thereunto.

VII. As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

VIII. This sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs before-hand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own

works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the publick and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

CHAP. XXII.—*Of lawful Oaths and Vows.*

I. A LAWFUL oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

II. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the word of God under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to be taken.

III. Whosoever taketh an oath, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching any thing that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.

IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to hereticks or infidels.

V. A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

VI. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made

voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

VII. No man may vow to do any thing forbidden in the word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God. In which respects, Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

CHAP. XXIII.—*Of the Civil Magistrate.*

I. GOD, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory, and the publick good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

III. The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call

synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

CHAP. XXIV.—*Of Marriage and Divorce.*

I. MARRIAGE is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent: yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than

he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own.

V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

VI. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a publick and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.

CHAP. XXV.—*Of the Church.*

I. THE catholick or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

II. The visible church, which is also catholick or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation, as before under the law,) consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

III. Unto this catholick visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

IV. This catholick church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which

are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and publick worship performed more or less purely in them.

V. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will.

VI. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.

CHAP. XXVI.—*Of Communion of Saints.*

I. ALL saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. And being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publick and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

II. Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

III. This communion which the saints have with Christ doth not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

CHAP. XXVII.—*Of the Sacraments.*

I. SACRAMENTS are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.

II. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution; which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

IV. There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the word lawfully ordained.

V. The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New.

CHAP. XXVIII.—*Of Baptism.*

I. BAPTISM is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world.

II. The outward element to be used in this sacrament

is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.

III. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

IV. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.

V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

VI. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

VII. The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

CHAP. XXIX.—*Of the Lord's Supper.*

I. OUR Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his church unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.

II. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross,

once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

III. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

IV. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

V. The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.

VI. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament; and hath been and is the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.

VII. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ

being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

VIII. Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.

CHAP. XXX.—*Of Church Censures.*

I. THE Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.

II. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

III. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from the like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

IV. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's supper for a season, and by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

CHAP. XXXI.—*Of Synods and Councils.*

I. FOR the better government, and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils.

II. As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.

III. It belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the publick worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his word.

IV. All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as an help in both.

V. Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs, which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition, in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.

CHAP. XXXII.—*Of the State of Men after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead.*

I. THE bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, (which neither die nor sleep,) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return

to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the scripture acknowledgeth none.

II. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

CHAP. XXXIII.—*Of the Last Judgment.*

I. GOD hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

II. The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

III. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

[Declaratory Act.

DECLARATORY ACT (1879) OF THE SYNOD OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

Before its Union with the Free Church.

(*Adopted May* 1879.)

Whereas the formula in which the Subordinate Standards of this Church are accepted requires assent to them as an exhibition of the sense in which the Scriptures are understood: Whereas these Standards, being of human composition, are necessarily imperfect, and the Church has already allowed exception to be taken to their teaching or supposed teaching on one important subject: And whereas there are other subjects in regard to which it has been found desirable to set forth more fully and clearly the view which the Synod takes of the teaching of Holy Scripture: Therefore, the Synod hereby declares as follows:—

1. That in regard to the doctrine of redemption as taught in the Standards, and in consistency therewith, the love of God to all mankind, His gift of His son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice, are matters which have been and continue to be regarded by this Church as vital in the system of Gospel truth, and to which due prominence ought ever to be given.
2. That the doctrine of the divine decrees, including the doctrine of election to eternal life, is held in connection and harmony with the truth that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and that He has provided a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and offered to all in the Gospel; and also with the responsibility of every man for his dealing with the free and unrestricted offer of eternal life.

3. That the doctrine of man's total depravity, and of his loss of "all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation," is not held as implying such a condition of man's nature as would affect his responsibility under the law of God and the Gospel of Christ, or that he does not experience the strivings and restraining influences of the Spirit of God, or that he cannot perform actions in any sense good; although actions which do not spring from a renewed heart are not spiritually good or holy—such as accompany salvation.
4. That while none are saved except through the mediation of Christ, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and when it pleaseth Him; while the duty of sending the Gospel to the heathen, who are sunk in ignorance, sin, and misery, is clear and imperative; and while the outward and ordinary means of salvation for those capable of being called by the Word are the ordinances of the Gospel: in accepting the Standards, it is not required to be held that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His grace to any who are without the pale of ordinary means, as it may seem good in His sight.
5. That in regard to the doctrine of the Civil Magistrate, and his authority and duty in the sphere of religion, as taught in the Standards, this Church holds that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of the Church, and "Head over all things to the Church which is His body"; disapproves of all compulsory or persecuting and intolerant principles in religion; and declares, as hitherto, that she does not require approval of anything in her Standards that teaches, or may be supposed to teach, such principles.
6. That Christ has laid it as a permanent and universal obligation upon His Church, at once to maintain her own ordinances, and to "preach the Gospel to every creature"; and has ordained that His people provide by their free-will offerings for the fulfilment of this obligation.

7. That, in accordance with the practice hitherto observed in this Church, liberty of opinion is allowed on such points in the Standards, not entering into the substance of the faith, as the interpretation of the "six days" in the Mosaic account of the creation: the Church guarding against the abuse of this liberty to the injury of its unity and peace.

DECLARATORY ACT (1892) OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

ANENT THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

BEFORE ITS UNION WITH THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Whereas it is expedient to remove difficulties and scruples which have been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence or are admitted to office in this Church, the General Assembly, with consent of Presbyteries, declare as follows:—

That, in holding and teaching, according to the Confession, the Divine purpose of grace towards those who are saved, and the execution of that purpose in time, this Church most earnestly proclaims, as standing in the forefront of the revelation of Grace, the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to sinners of mankind, manifested especially in the Father's gift of the Son to be the Saviour of the world, in the coming of the Son to offer Himself a propitiation for sin, and in the striving of the Holy Spirit with men to bring them to repentance.

That this Church also holds that all who hear the Gospel are warranted and required to believe to the saving of their souls; and that in the case of such as do not believe, but perish in their sins, the issue is due to their own rejection of the Gospel call. That this Church does not teach, and does not regard the Confession as teaching, the fore-ordination of men to death irrespective of their own sin.

That it is the duty of those who believe, and one end of their calling by God, to make known the Gospel to all men

everywhere for the obedience of faith. And that while the Gospel is the ordinary means of salvation for those to whom it is made known, yet it does not follow, nor is the Confession to be held as teaching, that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His mercy, for Christ's sake, and by His Holy Spirit, to those who are beyond the reach of these means, as it may seem good to Him, according to the riches of His grace.

That, in holding and teaching, according to the Confession of Faith, the corruption of man's whole nature as fallen, this Church also maintains that there remain tokens of his greatness as created in the image of God; that he possesses a knowledge of God and of duty; that he is responsible for compliance with the moral law and with the Gospel; and that, although unable without the aid of the Holy Spirit to return to God, he is yet capable of affections and actions which in themselves are virtuous and praiseworthy.

That this Church disclaims intolerant or persecuting principles, and does not consider her office-bearers, in subscribing the Confession, committed to any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment.

That while diversity of opinion is recognised in this Church on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith therein set forth, the Church retains full authority to determine, in any case which may arise, what points fall within this description, and thus to guard against any abuse of this liberty to the detriment of sound doctrine, or to the injury of her unity and peace.

Act IX. 1894.—Anent Declaratory Act 1892 on Confession of Faith.

The General Assembly enact and declare as follows:—

Whereas the Declaratory Act 1892 was passed to remove difficulties and scruples which had been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive license, or are admitted to office in this

Church, the Assembly hereby declare that the statements of doctrine contained in the said Act are not thereby imposed upon any of the Church's office-bearers as part of the Standards of the Church; but that those who are licensed or ordained to office in this Church, in answering the questions and subscribing the Formula, are entitled to do so in view of the said Declaratory Act.

QUESTIONS AT THE ORDINATION OR INDUCTION OF A MINISTER.

QUESTIONS.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and life?

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the doctrine of this Church, set forth in the Confession of Faith, approven by Acts of General Synods and Assemblies; do you acknowledge the said doctrine as expressing the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures; and will you constantly maintain and defend the same, and the purity of worship in accordance therewith?

3. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to and inconsistent with the said doctrine of this Church?

4. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of the Church, has therein appointed a government in the hands of church-officers, distinct from, and not subordinate in its own province to, civil government, and that the civil magistrate does not possess jurisdiction or authoritative control over the regulation of the affairs of Christ's Church; and do you approve of the general principles with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the Church of Christ, and her subjection to Him as her only Head, and to His Word as her only standard, embodied in the claim of Right of 1842, the Protest of 1843, and the Basis of Union of 1847, as principles which are sanctioned by the Word of God and the subordinate standards of this Church?

5. Do you acknowledge the Presbyterian government and discipline, as authorised in this Church, to be founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God; do you promise to maintain, and submit to, the said government and discipline; and, while cherishing a spirit of brotherhood towards all the faithful followers of Christ, do you engage to seek the purity, edification, peace, and extension of this Church?

6. Are not zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of saving souls, and not worldly designs or interests, so far as you know your own heart, your great motives and chief inducements, to enter into the office of the holy ministry?

7. Do you promise to be subject in the Lord to this Presbytery, and to the superior judicatories of this Church, and conscientiously to take your part in their proceedings?

8. Do you engage, in the strength of the grace that is in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, to rule well your own house, to live a holy and circumspect life, and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of Christ?

9. Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, to procure the call of this congregation?

FORMULA OF SUBSCRIPTION.

(*To be subscribed by Probationers on receiving licence, and by all Ministers and Elders at the time of their admission.*)

I, , do hereby declare that, in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, I will constantly maintain and defend the doctrine, worship, and government of this Church, with the liberty and exclusive spiritual jurisdiction thereof, as expressed in my answers to the questions put to me; and that I will fulfil, to the utmost of my power, all the obligations to which I have solemnly pledged myself.

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APPENDIX C.

EXTRACT from the preamble to the 39 Articles of the Church of England.

7

No man hereafter shall either print, or preach, to draw the Article aside anyway, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof; and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.



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